



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

**MINUTES – Approved
September 17, 2026**

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

AUGUST 20, 2026, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY, 1400 EMELINE, CONFERENCE ROOMS 206–207, SANTA CRUZ
MICROSOFT TEAMS (831) 454-2222, CONFERENCE 282 967 448#



Present: Antonio Rivas, Dan Barnett, Dean Kashino, Hugh McCormick, Kaelin Wagnermarsh,
Michael Neidig, Rachel Montoya, Valerie Webb, Xaloc Cabanes, Supervisor De Serpa
Absent: Jeffrey Arlt, Natalie Stott
Staff: Dr. Marni Sandoval, Jane Batoon-Kurovski

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- I. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes.
Jeffrey Arlt joined virtually as a public member.
 - II. Public Comment – 1 individual addressed the BHAB in the conference room.
1 individual addressed the BHAB on Teams.
 - III. Board Member Announcements
 - Dan Barnett announced this meeting is his last as he plans to relocate out of state.
 - Mike Neidig requested to play Supervisor Koenig's video regarding the issue of reducing expenses across the public safety system. Comments included the need to make changes and to look at the public safety and justice system.
 - IV. Approve July 16, 2026 Minutes
Motion / Second: Antonio Rivas / Valerie Webb
Ayes: Rivas, Barnett, Kashino, McCormick, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Montoya, Webb, De Serpa
Abstain: Cabanes
Nays: None
Passed.

Approve July 27, 2026 Retreat Minutes
Motion / Second: Antonio Rivas / Kaelin Wagnermarsh
Ayes: Rivas, Barnett, Kashino, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Cabanes, De Serpa
Abstain: McCormick, Montoya, Webb
Nays: None
Passed.
 - V. Secretary's Report – no report.
 - VI. Patient's Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate for Advocacy, Inc.
No report. George did not attend the meeting.
 - VII. Board of Supervisors Report – Supervisor Kim De Serpa
 - Clarified that the county has an active public defender; only individuals who are dangerous or charged with serious violent crimes remain in jail.

- New laws allow individuals with severe mental illness who cannot care for themselves or pose risks may be conserved, but funding and bed shortages limit the ability to place them in appropriate facilities.
- Clarified that the County's discretionary nonprofit funding has shifted toward equity-focused programs. Statewide budget crisis and loss of Medi-Cal for 25K residents threaten critical services. Healthcare agencies face a \$200M countywide shortfall. Proposal is to allocate \$1.5M to food security and reserve \$2.5M for nonprofits addressing essential needs.
- BOS approved placing a half-cent sales tax measure on the November ballot to offset HRI-related funding losses, aiming to generate \$25M–\$27M annually to help sustain healthcare and behavioral health services.
- Other Comments / Discussion items:
 1. Board member identified the need for additional treatment, residential, step-down capacity. BH and Sheriff's Office continue working on diversion and treatment options. Future action: Explore inviting the Sheriff to a future meeting to discuss jail operations, recidivism, diversion, and system improvements.
 2. Youth Crisis Services – 119 youth served through August 14, approximately 74% discharged home with follow-up services. Program continues to reduce out-of-county placements.
 3. Adult/Residential Capacity – Adult crisis residential services remain below community needs. Upcoming 16-bed residential program may reduce out-of-county placements; financial sustainability will depend on utilization and revenue.
 4. Maternal Behavioral Health – Board discussed the lack of local specialized treatment for severe postpartum psychiatric conditions. Stated that El Camino Hospital provides specialized maternal mental health services when clinically appropriate, and Nurture in Soquel has licensed therapists for postpartum issues.

VIII. Behavioral Health Director's Report – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director

1. Adult System of Care (ASOC) Update
 - BHSA Implementation– Implemented FSP Level 1 (ICM), completed assessments and orientations, streamlined on-call workflows, added team intro videos, and removed a redundant management layer.
 - Housing & HMIS Coordination– Partnering with housing providers to ensure HMIS documentation for all BHSA-funded placements.
 - BH Website– Modernized the BH website with an updated design and improved navigation.
 - Upcoming Program Launches– Planning ACT and FCT programs and coordinating with DHCS to implement IPS and CSC (FEP) through the Volunteer Center.
 - Bridge House Navigation Center– Bridge House opening delayed due to fire-prevention and supply issues; temporary occupancy granted, with move-in expected by next update.
2. Children's System of Care (CSOC) Update
 - Screened 227 youth and enrolled 69 into FSP Level 1; updating screening tools to prioritize youth in child welfare, probation, homelessness risk, and transition-age groups.
 - CSS enrollment into FSP was lower than expected (32 of 74 child-welfare youth); additional guidance and training will ensure presumptive eligibility is applied consistently, with expected enrollment increasing to 70–75%.
3. Substance Use Disorder Services Update
 - Integrated Care Evolution: SUDS is supporting BH's transition to fully integrated mental health and substance use care to provide seamless, comprehensive services for all clients.

- Integration Roadmap: BH leadership created a systemwide integration roadmap, with SUDS, Adult Outpatient, and BH Access jointly implementing the plan.
- Phase 1 Implementation: SUDS clinicians will embed in Adult Outpatient and Access teams, and mental health clinicians will provide brief assessments and link clients to the SUDS service array.
- Leadership Update: Sr BH Manager Casey Swank is departing at month's end; appreciation shared for her contributions and support.

IX. Site Visit Committee – Community Connections: Mike, Dean and Dan visited the site.

- Long-standing recovery center offering community engagement, career services, health support, and resilience living programs; serves about 1,000 clients, requires BH referrals, and has seen reduced Kaiser funding.
- Agency follows a recovery model with daily socialization program and a jail-based Friends Outside program which tries to link people to services. Overall impressed with agency, with questions about how Cal-AIM re-entry may affect the program.
- Facility offers recovery-focused outreach programs, including jail engagement, aimed at connecting people to community supports and helping clients develop skills and meaningful pathways based on individual interests.
- Suggestion: Encourage BHAB to attend open 12-step meetings AA, Al-Anon to learn about substance use and recovery; not appropriate as formal site visits.

X. Revised Mission Statement, Vision and Goals

- Board discussed revising its mission, vision and goals to guide future priorities.
- Proposed Ad Hoc Committees:
 1. System Efficiency
 2. Outreach
 3. Site Visit
 4. Finances
- Preferred presentations:
 - Kaelin: Heather Rodgers and Sheriff's Office
 - Valerie: Mobile Crisis Response and United Way (211)
 - Rachel: Heather Rogers and Youth Incarceration Services
 - Antonio: Farris Sabbah and PVUSD
 - Dean: Crisis Prevention /Intervention Services and MHCAN
 - Hugh: MHCAN and Heather Rogers
 - Xaloc: Sheriff's Office and Crisis Prevention/Intervention Services

XI. Grand Jury Report Update

BH response scheduled for BOS consideration on September 15th; final County responses due September 23rd. BHAB to review final public responses and consider relevant findings in future work.

XII. Future Agenda Items

- 2026 Data Notebook Survey: data will be reviewed with department before bringing the completed material to the BHAB.
- MHCAN presentation next month.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:02pm.