



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

MINUTES – Approved
November 20, 2025



Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

OCTOBER 16, 2025, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY, 1400 EMELINE, ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ 95060
MICROSOFT TEAMS (831) 454-2222, CONFERENCE ID 875 664 181#

Present: Antonio Rivas, Dean Kashino, Hugh McCormick, Jeffrey Arlt, Kaelin Wagnermash, Michael Neidig, Rachel Montoya, Valerie Webb, Xaloc Cabanes, Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa

Absent: Jennifer Wells Kaupp

Staff: Amy Rhoades, Jane Batoon-Kurovski

- I. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:06 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes.
- II. Public Comment – 1 addressed the BHAB in the conference room.
- III. Board Member Announcements
 1. 2025 Data Notebook – work still in progress, will ask for an extension.
 2. Attending the meeting:
 - Natalie submitted application to be a youth member.
 - Dr. Heather Thomas – spearheading fight against Fentanyl and was involved with the making of the movie Fentanyl High. Per Dr. Thomas, schools are ready for substance education and intervention and are now working with all middle schools and some high schools through their Wellness Centers.
- IV. Approve September 18, 2025 Minutes
Motion / Second: Antonio Rivas / Mike Niedig
Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, McCormick, Arlt, Wagnermash, Neidig, Montoya, Webb, Cabanes, De Serpa
Nayes: None
Abstain: None
Result: Approved
- V. Secretary's Report
 - Reminder to board members that the minimum requirement is 2 trainings, 2 hours total for the year.
 - No attendance issues. Bylaws have been accepted, which states if board member has 2 unexcused absences in a row, then there would be a vacancy.
- VI. Patient's Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate
September report was provided. George did not attend the meeting.
- VII. Board of Supervisors Report – Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa

- Wrote ordinance on banning the sale of recreational nitrous oxide and is no longer allowed in Santa Cruz County. The ordinance was shared with every city in our county as well as Monterey County and Santa Clara County hoping to get a regional ban.
- The next ordinance is banning the sale of Kratom. It is an opiate-like substance sold over the counter and is more potent than morphine. The Kratom ordinance is written and will go before the BOS on Tuesday. If it passes, it will go into effect in couple of months.
- MHCAN Update – they are submitting the final May and June invoices and obtaining new liability insurance. They will likely need to work with another non-profit organization, such as an umbrella organization.
- Clarification regarding SB43 which expands the definition of grave disability. SB43 was passed nearly 2 years ago which provides authority to place individuals under conservatorship. Santa Cruz County deferred implementation due to lack of facilities for placement and have not begun conservatorships due to limited funding. The law will take effect January 1, 2026, and will be required to comply.

VIII. Behavioral Health Services Act Update – Amy Rhoades, BHSA Coordinator

Overview of Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan and Transition Updates:

1. BHSA Planning Timeline – Public comment will open at February 19th BHAB meeting, and close at the March 19th BHAB meeting. Draft is due March 31, 2026. The final integrated plan for BHSA will be completed June 2026, and BHSA begins on July 1, 2026.
2. Community Planning Process will include:
 - a. 10 Focus groups will be strategically scheduled, typically 5-10 people. The consultant will come in with her team to facilitate the groups. Plan is to have BHAB focus group.
 - b. Three Community forums will be held in the first three weeks of November. The consultant will provide information about BHSA and will do 2-hr sessions open to everyone. November 18th will be at 1400 Emeline, November 17th at the Aptos Public Library, and currently working with NAMI for Watsonville location.
 - c. Amy will do virtual education sessions through the first 3 weeks of November, 2 per week virtual, and will record so that the public and BH contractors can hear about BHSA to understand the changes that are coming.
 - d. Survey will be sent out to collect feedback about BHSA 3-year plan.
 - e. Currently trying to identify who will participate in the key informant interviews. These interviews will have more in-depth information from people with lived experience, an internal provider, one contracted provider, someone in law enforcement, BHAB member.
 - f. Community engagement needs to be done before Thanksgiving.

IX. Site Visit Ad Hoc Committee – Janus Site Visit

- Enthusiastic staff, expanding services, Watsonville hotel is going to be excellent addition to operate at 3.1-3.5.
- About 40% turnover last year.
- New consumers do not need appointments. People can come in, get assessed and then triaged. This facility covers a variety of levels of acuity and on board with peer support.
- Next site visit: November 4th, 12-2pm at Telecare (both CSP/PHF)

X. Review and discussion of Funding Ad Hoc Report

- Goal is to identify capacity building for cost effective treatment.
- 6-year strategic plan - must provide input by January.
- Highlights – the need for more services, the need for significant increase in funding, ways to get that funding.
- November meeting – provide presentation on findings and recommendations.

XI. New Agenda Items

1. 2025 Data Notebook – working on responses and will ask for extension to submit the report.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.