



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

MINUTES – Approved
March 19, 2026



Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

FEBRUARY 19, 2026, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY, 1400 EMELINE, ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ 95060
MICROSOFT TEAMS (831) 454-2222, CONFERENCE 316 118 950#

Present: Antonio Rivas, Dean Kashino, Hugh McCormick (Remote), Jeffrey Arlt, Kaelin
Wagnermarsh, Michael Neidig, Rachel Montoya, Xaloc Cabanes
Absent: Natalie Stott, Valerie Webb, Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa
Staff: Marni Sandoval, Amy Rhoades, Lun Wang, Victoria Reynolds

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- I. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes.
Note: Hugh McCormick participated remotely at 3:22pm.
 - II. Public Comment – 3 individuals addressed the BHAB in the conference room.
 - III. Board Member Announcement
 - Each district is holding a town hall meeting. The Chair recommended that everyone attend.
 - IV. Approve January 15, 2026 Minutes
Per Jeffrey, approval deferred due to questions about part of the content; tabled to the next meeting.
 - V. Secretary's Report
 - Required trainings must be finished by April 1st or a vacancy is created in the seat.
 - Three Board member seats are due to expire.
 - VI. Patient's Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate
January report was provided. George did attend the meeting.
 - 7th Avenue Center discussion on victim connection issue, ultimately spoke with conservator.
 - Recommendations for 7th Avenue – facility redesign needed; privacy curtains, narrow hallways, and food options raised as concerns.
 - George clarified that he gets involved with residents at 7th Avenue that are out of county.
 - George visited Hope Forward unannounced; staff requested training from George regarding his role, responsibilities, limitations, confidentiality, etc.
 - Clarification on how individuals can contact George - facilities must post residents' rights and provide Advocacy, Inc. contact information.
 - VII. Behavioral Health Director's Report – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director
 1. Introduction of Lun Wang, Health Equity Officer: Supports the agency's equity and diversity efforts in behavioral health, helps meet state requirements for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS), and partners with Public Health and clinic services on an integrated equity plan across health agencies.
 2. Adults Behavioral Health Update

- Preparing for the opening of the Bridge Housing Low Barrier Navigation Center by identifying eligible clients and beginning planning with them; partnering with Housing Matters and facility developers for program planning.
 - Transitioning to the state-required LOCUS level of care tool to support evidence-based practices and better assess client care needs at entry. The ANSA tool will be phased out as part of this change.
 - Partnering with the state's Centers of Excellence to prepare for implementing required practices under BHSA and BH Connect, including ACT, Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis, and Individual Placement and Support (supported employment).
3. Children's Behavioral Health Update
- Conducting mid-year meetings with children's system of care providers to inform service planning, coordination of care, and ensure needs are being met in partnership with providers.
4. Substance Use Disorder Services Update
- Launched Renew Path which is a program that's supporting justice involved adults with care coordination, referrals and recovery residences. Program launched earlier this month.
 - DUI services are now contracted and restored after prior provider closures. New county providers include Sobriety Works and Alert Driving.

VIII. Site Visit Committee Update – 7th Avenue Center

- The facility was described as clean and relatively safe but physically tight with limited indoor space, though it includes outdoor areas for residents.
- Only 15-20% of residents are from Santa Cruz County, with most from other counties; the facility has 32 MHRC beds, with a small amount available within the state.
- Discussion noted they have a waitlist, and a possible increase in request to have people in that facility following SB43.
- Concerns were raised about space and gender distribution in the facility, with women having fewer wings than men.
- This is the first facility that reported they were satisfied with the integration of the services for the clients, the follow-up in the coordination with the services upon discharge which is attributed to its long-term care model.
- Members questioned the hand off and follow up after discharge. The majority of individuals are out of county, so they can't release them into Santa Cruz County.
- Clarified that licensing and service requirements are monitored by the California Department of Health Services and through local Medi-Cal certification site visits.

IX. Jail Packet Revisions: Two Sections for review - Hugh McCormick

- Introduced current work with the board and invited comments or feedback from members.
- Shared an overview of the scope and direction of the developing jail report; expected to be completed in about a month, with the final version to be shared with the board.
- Postpone reviewing and discussion to next meeting.

X. Response to the BHSA Integrated Plan

Motion to create ad hoc committee (Mike, Dean, Rachel, Hugh) to draft response to the BHSA integration plan: Jeffrey Arlt Second: Mike Neidig

Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, Arlt, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Montoya, Cabanes

Nays: None

Abstain: McCormick

Result: Passed.

XI. Approve Letter of Recommendation regarding staff training in Generative AI Tools

Motion / Second: Dean Kashino / Jeffrey Arlt

Ayes: Kashino, Arlt, Neidig, Cabanes

Nays: Rivas

Abstain: Wagnermarsh; Montoya, McCormick

Result: Passed.

- XII. Approve BOS Letter of Recommendation: General Fund for BH increase from 1.3% to 2% over next 3 years
Motion / Second: Dean Kashino / Antonio Rivas
Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, Arlt, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Montoya, Cabanes
Nays: None
Abstain: McCormick
Result: Passed.
- XIII. Approve BH Letter of Recommendation: Submit proposal for Clubhouse to CBH Innovation committee grant (\$20M available) *
Motion / Second: Antonio Rivas / Jeffrey Arlt
Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, Arlt, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Montoya, Cabanes
Nays: None
Abstain: McCormick
Result: Passed.
- XIV. Approve BOS Letter of Recommendation: Mike Beebe's two priorities: 1) Doubling in-county mental health and substance use treatment capacity in the next 3 years, saving an estimated \$11M/year; 2) Reducing by 50% the time in both the justice system and in custody for those not sentenced within the next five years, estimated \$7.3M/year
Motion / Second: Mike Neidig / Rachel Montoya
Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, Arlt, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Montoya
Nays: None
Abstain: Cabanes, McCormick
Result: Passed.
- XV. Approve Thank You Letter – Dr. Jennifer Wells Kaupp
Motion / Second: Antonio Rivas / Jeffrey Arlt
Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, Arlt, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Montoya, Cabanes
Nays: None
Abstain: McCormick
Result: Passed.
- XVI. Future Agenda Items
- George Carvalho to provide a presentation on his job duties.
 - MHCAN update – what happened, what happened to the people that utilized MHCAN.
- XVII. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.