



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

MINUTES – Approved
April 16, 2026



Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

MARCH 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 203 120 58 #

Present: Antonio Rivas, Dean Kashino, Jeffrey Arlt, Kaelin Wagnermarsh, Michael Neidig, Natalie Stott, Valerie Webb, Xaloc Cabanes, Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa
Absent: Hugh McCormick (virtual-public member), Rachel Montoya
Staff: Marni Sandoval, Amy Rhoades, Danielle Long, Jane Batoon-Kurovski

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- I. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:04 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes.
Note: Hugh McCormick participated remotely at 3:12pm, attendance noted as a public member.
 - II. Public Comment – 1 individual addressed the BHAB in the conference room.
 - III. Board Member Announcements
 - Recognized Social Worker Month.
 - Highlighted Civic Summit which encourages kids to get interested in the political process.
 - Announced upcoming Wellness Walk on March 28th, 12-3pm, Sky Park in Scotts Valley.
 - IV. Approve January 15, 2026 Minutes
Motion / Second: Dean Kashino / Antonio Rivas
Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, Arlt, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Stott, Webb, Cabanes, De Serpa
Nays: None
Abstain: McCormick, Montoya
Passed.

Approve February 19, 2026 Minutes
Motion / Second: Dean Kashino / Antonio Rivas
Ayes: Rivas, Kashino, Arlt, Wagnermarsh, Neidig, Stott, Cabanes, De Serpa
Nays: None
Abstain: McCormick, Montoya, Webb
Passed.
 - V. Secretary’s Report
 - New cycle for trainings begins on April 1st.
 - Training opportunities announced: CalBHBC on April 17th-18th, Crisis Jam on Youtube Wednesday’s at 9am, NAMI in person and online, Commission on Behavioral Health March 26-27.
 - Two BHAB vacancies: Transitional Age Youth and District 5.
 - Three members’ terms expiring, reappointment required to continue voting.
 - VI. Presentations
 - Crisis Now Fidelity Update – Kristen Ellis, Sr. Director, Consulting Operations of Recovery Innovations International
 - System-Level Rating

- County improved from Level 2 to Level 4. Level 5 is fully fledged crisis system.
- Status of System Implementation: All components at Level 3 or higher. MCT and Facility at Level 4. Growing cross-system integration.
- Status of Call Center Hub – Level 3 Progressing
 - o Stronger system integration and active refinement of continuity-of-care partnerships.
- Status of Mobile Crisis Services – Level 4 Close
 - o Strong foundational model in place and several Level 5 elements underway.
- Status of Facility-Based Services – Level 4 Close
 - o Well-established Crisis Receiving Services and second facility planned, expanding capacity.
- What's Next: 1) system-wide data integration & dashboards, 2) real-time coordination, 3) formalized peer roles and 4) high-performing Key Performance Indicators.
- Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Crisis Now Evaluation – Inti Chomsky, Sr. Consultant of RDA Consulting and Julia Owens
 - Mid evaluation update: July 2024-March 2025
 1. Patient Access
 - o MCRT responded to a total of 1453 incidents from July 2024 through March 2025 for a combined average of about 163 incidents per month during the time period. Total MHL incidents: 748; Total MERT incidents: 481, Total MERTY incidents: 234
 - o CSP Admissions, CSP which operates through Telecare, admitted a total of 909 patients for FY24-25, with an average of 101 admissions per month. Voluntary admits 105, 295 from Law Enforcement, 509 from MCRT or ED.
 2. Patient Outcomes
 - o More assessments, fewer holds.
 - o Most referrals involve individuals already connected to behavioral health services.
 3. System-Level Indicators
 - o EMS behavioral health calls decreased in FY23–24, with an average reduction of 4.2 calls per day (128 fewer per month), improving ambulance availability (6–8 hours/day) Fewer behavioral health patients require ambulance transport, reducing cost and stress and allowing for more appropriate, specialized response.

VII. Patient's Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate
February report was provided. George did not attend the meeting.

- VIII. Behavioral Health Director's Report – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director
1. Adults Behavioral Health Update
 - Anticipate opening the Bridge House Project in mid-April.
 - BHSA Integrated Plan supporting adult services program design.
 - Evidence Based Practices Implementation: The State has provided 5 years of funding to support training and technical assistance for all county staff. Practices being advanced within the adult system of care include Assertive Community Treatment, First Episode Psychosis, and Individual Placement Services
 - Implementing the LOCUS Level of Care Determination Tool in the adult system to streamline initial screenings, assess needs and symptoms, and ensure individuals are matched to the most appropriate level of behavioral health care.
 - System Level Support items
 - The Deputy Director is helping to update the BH website.
 - Conducting interviews to fill the Senior Manager position in the adult system of care.
 2. Children's Behavioral Health Update
 - o Received a supplemental award through the Behavioral Health Student Services Act, administered by the state commission, to support school-based programs in partnership with the County Office of Education. Additional funding of up to

\$450K will expand substance use disorder linkage efforts through the Companion Project and extend the grant for two years.

3. Substance Use Disorder Update
 - Strengthening youth access and engagement – working closely with our DMC-ODS youth outpatient providers to identify strategies for increasing referrals and improving retention for young people in need of services.
 - System Improvements – addressing documentation deficiencies with a residential treatment provider and troubleshooting authorization challenges related to residential care.
 - Application submitted for Proposition 36 (Theft Reduction Act) funding, which aims to divert individuals with multiple prior convictions from incarceration to drug and mental health treatment; award status pending.
 - System Level Support – Casey Swank has postponed her resignation to the end of August.

Presentation: Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Integrated Plan & Open 30 days Public Comment - Amy Rhoades, Health Services Manager

- Overarching System Strengths and Resources: 1) Mental Health Services & Supports, 2) Workforce – Dedicated Providers, 3) Care Coordination, 4) Community Education / Resource Awareness, 5) Access to Care.
- Overarching System Gaps and Needs: 1) Insufficient Treatment Beds, 2) Mental Health Services and Supports, 3) Care Coordination, 4) Insufficient Housing, 5) Community Education / Resource Awareness.
 - Full-Service Partnership (FSP) includes: 3 Children/Youth FSPs and 1 High Fidelity Wraparound program; 3 Adult/Older Adult FSP programs; utilization of required Evidence Based Practices and implementation of FSP Levels of Care; Implementation of referral pathways between FSP LOC and Outpatient LOC; expansion of the required assertive field-based strategies for SUD treatment and rapid access to Medications for Addiction Treatment.
- Housing Interventions for BH Consumers include rental subsidies for those with BH needs; provide operating subsidies and Participant Assistance Funds for those with severe BH needs; implement the required Housing First model; strengthen coordination with MCPs and Community Supports providers; and strengthen partnership with Housing for Health.
- Submit Public Comment by 5pm, April 16, 2026.

IX. Site Visit Committee Update

- El Dorado site visit scheduled on 03/25/26, 10am-12pm.

X. Funding Ad Hoc Committee

- Advised BHAB to meet with their BOS to review two recommendation letters, seek feedback, and assess commitment to incorporating them into the six-year plan.
- Explore maximizing Measure K funds for Behavioral Health, including potential support for mobile crisis services, with approximately \$10M available annually.

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

- Shared current work with the board. Postpone discussion until the next meeting.

XII. Response to the BHSA Integrated Plan – draft letter to be reviewed at next meeting.

XIII. Future Agenda Items – None.

XIV. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.