



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Behavioral Health Equity Committee (BHEC)

GOVERNING STRUCTURE

I. Vision

Our efforts are focused on the promotion of behavioral health equity for unserved and underserved racial and ethnic communities, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer and intersex (LGBTQI), Veterans, deaf and hard of hearing and other cultural groups. Based on SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Equity¹ tips, key strategies will be focused on data, policy, quality, and communication:

- a) The *data strategy* utilizes available federal, state, county and community data to identify, monitor, and respond to behavioral health disparities.
- b) The *policy strategy* promotes policy initiatives that strengthen the impact of BHS programs in advancing behavioral health equity.
- c) The *quality practice and workforce development strategy* helps BHS to expand the behavioral health workforce capacity to improve outreach, engagement, and quality of care for unserved and underserved populations.
- d) The *communication strategy* increases awareness and access to information about behavioral health disparities and strategies to promote behavioral health equity.

The BHEC will further develop and make recommendations around these key strategies to be included in the Cultural Competency Plan annual update.

II. Role and Purpose

The BHEC seeks to impact and advise BHS policies and initiatives by:

- a) Strategically focusing on racial, ethnic, LGBTQI and other cultural groups in BHS programs
- b) Using a data-informed quality improvement approach to address racial and ethnic disparities in BHS programs
- c) Recommending that BHS policies, initiatives, and collaborations include emphasis on decreasing disparities
- d) Proposing innovative, cost-effective training strategies to a diverse workforce

The BHEC will satisfy the above role by conducting the following activities to promote increased cultural awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness in OC's behavioral health services:

- a) Culturally and linguistically appropriate services: The BHEC will advise Orange County Behavioral Health Services on ways to improve access and engagement with individuals who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and/or other communication needs.

¹ <https://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity>



- b) **Trainings:** The BHEC, through the Multicultural Development Program (MDP), works with Behavioral Health Training Services to create and coordinate trainings focused on cultural sensitivity, awareness and humility; and to ensure that other trainings include cultural considerations related to the subject of the training and that such considerations are included as one of the training objectives.
- c) **Leadership:** The BHEC will work closely with the BHS leadership in promoting elimination of community health disparities and inequity in Behavioral Health Services.

III. Operationalized Values

The BHEC will strive to work in a manner that is consistent with its values:

- a. **Equity** – *Attaining the highest level of behavioral health for all by addressing root causes of inequities.* The BHEC’s membership, activities, and planning processes will be inclusive of the diverse communities in Orange County, especially those where data indicate to have disparities in health.
- b. **Inclusive** – *Health includes physical, mental, spiritual, economic, environmental, and educational factors that contribute to it.* The BHEC’s membership and planning processes will be inclusive of a broad range of perspectives representing the various factors that contribute to health.
- c. **Collaborative** – *requires a partnership between many entities including residents, health care providers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, businesses, and government.* The BHEC will conduct its activities in a collaborative manner and actively engage community partners in working towards its shared vision and goals.
- d. **Multi-dimensional** – *Culture must be understood at the individual, family, and system levels.* The BHEC will ensure that planning processes consider the various dimensions of culture.

IV. Membership

- a. **Representation:** The BHEC is composed of individuals who are dedicated to cultural diversity and equity and come from a variety of backgrounds. The BHEC shall be a body representing a broad cross-section of interests and experiences. The BHEC does not limit membership from for-profit entities. Joining the BHEC as a means for solicitation or using meetings as a forum for solicitation is prohibited and may be cause for removal. The BHEC shall strive to include at minimum:
 - i. Representation from the following suggested organizations:
 - Orange County Health Care Agency, Public Health Services
 - Orange County Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Services
 - Orange County Social Services Agency
 - Orange County Department of Education
 - Cal Optima
 - Children and Families Commission of Orange County
 - Orange County 211
 - ii. Representatives with the following expertise or perspectives:
 - Community based organizations
 - Outreach and engagement programs
 - Bilingual/bi-cultural
 - Black/African Americans
 - LGBTQI



- Veterans
- Faith-based organizations
- Community health center
- Healthcare provider or other affiliation
- Local government
- Public safety
- Transportation
- Universities, colleges, and other research institutions
- Advocacy organizations

- iii. Individuals, including community members, who can represent perspectives of populations identified as having lived experience with the Behavioral Health system. Examples include, but are not limited to, persons with behavioral health conditions or family members of a person with a behavioral health condition.
 - iv. Other at-large members involved in assessing and/or promoting cultural diversity and equity
- b. Term:** There is no limit to the number of years a member may serve. Membership will be renewed based on members' interest and ability to serve every two years.
- c. Selection:** Individuals or representatives of organizations wishing to participate on the BHEC may request to join the BHEC as a voting member by submitting a written application. The application will be reviewed and voted upon by the BHEC Steering Committee. Applications approved by the BHEC Steering Committee will be forwarded via email to BHEC members for review prior to the next BHEC meeting. The BHEC will strive to come to consensus about approval of applications. When consensus cannot be reasonably reached, a vote of BHEC members will be conducted via email. Approved applicants will join the BHEC as a voting member at the first BHEC meeting after their application is approved.
- d. Member Responsibilities:** In order to complete these tasks, BHEC members have the following responsibilities:
- i. Participate in scheduled meetings. Meetings will occur at least three times a year. Attendance to meetings will be monitored. The BHEC Steering Committee may contact members with excessive absences to discuss their interest and ability to serve on the BHEC.
 - ii. Commit to serving on at least one BHEC work group.
 - iii. Communicate information about the activities of the BHEC to the community and partners.
 - iv. Assist the BHEC in identifying resources to support the work of the BHEC.
 - v. Support BHEC activities, such as data collection, town halls, etc.

V. Officers

- a. Co-Chairs:** There shall be two Co-Chair positions. These shall be one **Behavioral Health Services Co-Chair** position filled by Ethnic Services Manager or a designated representative from Orange County Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Services and one **Community Co-Chair**, selected by the BHEC from among the members unaffiliated with the County of Orange and its agencies.
- b. Community Co-Chair Term:** The term for the Community Co-Chairs shall run for two years from January to December.
- c. Community Co-Chair Selection:** The Community Co-Chair shall be selected by the BHEC by majority vote at the last scheduled BHEC meeting before the start of a new term, usually in December.



d. Officer Responsibilities:

- i. Behavioral Health Services Co-Chair:** The Ethnic Services manager or a representative of Orange County Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Services shall serve as a permanent Co-Chair of the BHEC. In collaboration with the Community Co-Chair, the BHS Co-Chair will set meeting agenda; facilitate BHEC meetings; establish committees and ad-hoc work groups as needed. The BHS Co-Chair shall rotate the responsibilities of chairing individual meetings with the other BHEC Co-Chair.

- ii. Community Co-Chair:** The BHEC shall select a Co-Chair from members unaffiliated with the County of Orange agencies participating on the BHEC. The Community Co-Chair, in collaboration with the Behavioral Health Services Co-Chair, will set the meeting agenda; facilitate BHEC meetings; establish committees and ad-hoc work groups as needed. Each Community Co-Chair shall rotate the responsibilities of chairing individual meetings with the BHS Co-Chair.

VI. Voting

The BHEC will strive to govern by consensus. When consensus cannot be reasonably reached, official actions taken by the BHEC shall be adopted by a majority vote. Each individual member present, not by proxy, will have one vote.

VII. Meetings

The BHEC shall schedule meetings at least three times per year at the discretion of the BHEC Steering Committee. Meetings will be open to the public, but only members may vote.

VIII. Committees and Work Groups

- a) Steering Committee:** The BHEC Steering Committee will be charged with the general oversight of affairs of the BHEC including review and setting of the BHEC agenda and review and recommendation of BHEC member applications. Seats on the BHEC Steering Committee will be determined by the BHEC and may include Co-Chairs, representatives from each committee, and other individuals such as representation from the school districts, hospital, city government, and academic institutions and representation of specific populations.

- b) Work Groups:** The BHEC shall establish or identify work groups, or task forces as it deems necessary to accomplish its purpose and role. This may include establishing or designating work groups to implement strategies related to priorities identified in the Cultural Competence Plan.

- c) Suggested work groups:** Community Relations and Education; Spirituality; Outreach and Engagement to Black/African Americans, populations who speak in one of the threshold languages or have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and or other communication needs; Veterans and Military; LGBTIQ

IX. Additional rules and procedures

The BHEC may establish any rules or procedures it so deems appropriate by consensus or majority action of the BHEC.