



# ORANGE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

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## Study Committee Meeting

### NOTES

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

#### \*In-Person meeting

601 N. Ross St., Santa Ana, CA 92701 – MPR Room

#### Hybrid Option:

<https://zoom.us/j/99364554212> / Meeting ID: 993 6455 4212

#### 10:06 – 10:10 a.m. Welcome & Introductions

Alan Albright

Members: Alan Albright, Fred Williams, Linda Smith, Steve McNally, Carla DiCandia, Ethan Truong, Chase Wickersham, Adela Cruz, Danielle Sena, Michell Fernandez (online)

Staff in attendance: Michelle Smith, Dawn Smith, Helen Cameron, Bradley Hutchins, Flor Yousefian Tehran, Karla Perez, Amy Nguyen

#### 10:10 – 11:40 a.m. Scheduled Discussion Items

##### ○ Early Childhood Policy Framework

##### By: Lee Lombardo

Lee Lombardo provided an overview of the Children and Families Coalition of Orange County. Founded in 2020, the group is focused on prevention of child abuse; prevention of negative impacts of poor social determinants of health, like housing lack of medical care, lack of food; reducing harm and trauma; and promote equity. Group also focuses on collaboration across key County and Private advisory groups.

Lee mentioned that the framework needs to be updated on the county website. She will send a copy of the framework to Karla to be provided to the BHAB, and Karla will work on updating the county website.

County purchased 50,000 licenses to program called Positive Parenting Program (PPP) that families could use online for additional support and live person would be available to help if needed. Chase Wickersham inquired if this program was still around or if this was a terminated service. Dawn confirmed that there are some licenses available, and that all of clinics are trained in Triple P level, 4 curriculum so they are all able to use that with parents for the youth who go into the clinics. Chase asked what other languages this resource was available in. Dawn shared this was available in Spanish and Farsi but need further confirmation on availability in Vietnamese. Steve McNally asked how many of the 50,000 licenses were still available and how this resource was available. The number of licenses still available would need to be verified as these were purchased back during Covid.

The areas of the framework the coalition focuses on is access, quality of care, and equity. While early childhood investment is crucial for future formation, due to budgetary constraints and lack of funding sources, this age group continues to be underinvested in. Chase asked if it would be possible to estimate what percentage of the county budget is focused on this population and identify some of the programs that exist. Due to the nature of the data collection process for this age group and various organization, estimation is difficult. Lee shared that there are home visiting programs for little ones that focus on parenting education. There are family resource centers that focus on the whole family, and there are food banks all over that families can access. Chase asked for an estimate of the population between ages 0-5. Dawn gave an estimate of 300,000. Chase expressed concern for lack of accessible programs to those who are most in need. Lee shared some programs which would provide this type of services, however there are not enough programs available to meet the need. Linda shared that a regional center just extended funding for another year for developmental mental health screenings for young children, so that's 1 of the things Prop 1 is going to look at is, how do we blend all funding from all of the different entities to reach the priority population.

Steve commented that this seemed like a collaborative effort amongst various groups and asked if a matrix is available. Linda asked for clarification regarding how this coalition works with First 5. Lee confirmed that they are aiming to be collaborative to avoid duplicity.

The Board of Supervisors funded new food pantry, CalWORKs has seen an increase in assistance to youth population, however kindergarten readiness rates have decreased from 2018/2019 due to lack of affordable housing, rising living costs, low minimum wage, and lack of sufficient medical insurance. There are varying reasons contributing to the current budget issues.

Alan Albright commented that prevention services have transitioned to California Department of Public Health and wanted to know if anyone from the collaborative was involved in the CDPH Planning process. Lee shared some members had received Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative funding but was unsure of involvement with CDPH Planning process. Alan spoke of an opportunity to provide feedback to the CDPH and pass on some information as recommendations to the to the State as it relates to prevention.

Steve suggested developing a public private model right that allows flexible money from the community with more restricted funding from the government to work together.

- **BHSA Policy Manual**

**By: Michelle Smith**

Michelle Smith provided an overview on the new updates of the BHSA Policy Manual and how to access the Policy documents online and navigate the website.

Michelle shared the information related to the BHSA planning is posted on the OCHCA website; there are videos that give viewers shorter overviews of information. It also provides information about all the community program planning meetings as well as the work group meetings.

Alan asked Michelle how she was tracking what changes were being made since DHCS does not issue information about what particular pieces get updated when that update

occurs. Michelle shared the State will say it is releasing a draft module via the DHCS distribution list. Alan asked if Karla could join this list and update the BHAB as the changes are sent out so the BHAB can stay informed of their role in the planning process.

Adela Cruz inquired if there was data available that tracks the impact of programs that are going to be discontinued. Michelle shared that information is available in the posted MHSA Plan, executive summary section. This includes all the information about the number of people served the budgets and the programs that are being sunseted. As part of the Community planning process, there have been many meetings with various specific focus groups with stake holders across Orange County. Landscape analysis has been completed, funding agencies in the background are looking at what can be done to maintain current infrastructures. Workgroups have begun to address changes specific to BHSA.

Adela inquired regarding the strategy for communicating to different stakeholders in the community about the planning meetings. Michelle shared that they have been using a ListServ, various committees, through planning partners at CalOptima and contract provider agencies. Steve inquired if there was a calendar online for the community to view. Adela conveyed the importance of keeping school districts informed of changes as they are often who families come to when looking for assistance and resources. Adela brought up reaching out to Social Services to find what is being done for minors who are left behind or unaccompanied because their parents are being detained or deported. There are kids coming back to school looking to the district for information on what to do. Alan asked what type of plan is in place to ensure that all school districts in Orange County are made aware of the types of resources available. Michelle and Dawn confirmed there is communication with OCDE, who is responsible for disseminating information to all the school districts through their superintendents, and either the superintendent or the point person oversee spreading the information throughout the school district.

Linda Smith conveyed that it there were many meetings for community to attend and many emails that were sent out, however, she suggested better coordination between the various meetings to ensure that they are more accessible and not held at the same time or back-to-back. Michelle would bring this feedback back to the teams and work towards more collaborative scheduling. Alan summarized that the BHAB members would like to be more involved and collaborate in the Community Planning Process in order to best fulfill their duties. Ethan Truong shared his experience of how he has seen information about resources being disseminated in the community.

**11:46 a.m.**

**Public Comment**

**Alan Albright**

- Mr. Jim Farrell

Mr. Farrell shared his experience of his role as a conservator and the handling of conservatorships at the clinics. He urged better communication between BHS and Public Guardian's office and suggested the development of a Behavioral Health Multidisciplinary Team where you have different people communicating for the well-being of a client.

**11:17 a.m.**

**Adjourn: 11:49AM**

**Alan Albright**

You may request supporting documentation distributed to the Behavioral Health Advisory Board as related to the agenda items upon request from Karla Perez, [kperez@ochca.com](mailto:kperez@ochca.com)

**Next Meeting:**

**BHAB Study Committee: August 13, 2025, 10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**