



# ORANGE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

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## Study Committee Meeting

### NOTES

Wednesday, August 13, 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

10:08 – 10:10 a.m.

#### Welcome & Introductions

Alan Albright

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

Staff in attendance: Helen Cameron, Karla Perez, Amy Nguyen, Mark Lawrenz, Glenda Aguilar, Tracy Ernt

10:10 – 11:40 a.m.

#### Scheduled Discussion Items

- SUD Updates

By: Mark Lawrenz

Mark Lawrenz provided an update on Prop 36 and the opioid abatement plan. He provided a brief overview of Prop 36, explaining that this proposition allows individuals who possess illegal drugs to be charged with a “treatment-mandated felony” instead of a misdemeanor, allowing access to treatment. Orange County Collaborative Courts, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender, and the Healthcare Agency, got together to address implementation and this went into effect on December 18, 2024, and the evaluations started on December 27, 2024. Currently, 609 prospective participants have been referred to Prop 36, of which 167 have agreed and accepted into the program, and 155 are currently in the program. This program is separate from the Drug Court Program. Tracy Ernt clarified that Prop 36 is modeled after Collaborative courts, but not a part of Collaborative Courts, so these clients are in SUD treatment clinics.

Linda Smith inquired about bed capacity and ability support these services due to the limited resources to fund this. Mark clarified that bed capacity has been increasing with the help of opioid abatement dollars, and there is a process to move clients to appropriate levels of care. Currently also in process of applying for Prop 47 grant, with some funding to be used to increase bed capacity.

Danielle Sena asked about the need for withdrawal management beds for Prop 36 clients. Mark shared that they have increased clinical withdrawal management services, and the

opening of the Irvine Campus will increase the number of beds. In addition, medical detox beds are currently being explored. Tracy Ernt added that specific to Prop 36, there has not been many that needed withdrawal management since medical detox is taking place while they are in custody.

Danielle inquired about the type of medication provided to clients. Tracy mentioned that Correctional Health would have better data to address her questions, and that she could find out what medications they were utilizing while clients are in custody. Mark suggested a presentation with Correctional Health would be beneficial.

Mark clarified what clinical monitored withdrawal management is versus medical detox. Chase inquired about the current bed capacity, which Mark shared is 88 with the understanding that the number of beds would be changing. They are in the process of preparing additional beds and having residential providers to be flexible with level of care. Mark also provided a brief explanation of Medical Assisted Treatment (MAT).

Mark shared clients may receive services while in custody, and clients who were out of custody would be referred to services. The challenge with the clients out of custody is that they are often not utilizing the services. Mark addressed the challenges of limited residential treatment beds and that the team is working on increasing capacities.

Michelle Fernandez inquired about dual diagnoses treatment for clients who are in custody. Mark explained that treatment is provided while in custody, linking the client to treatment upon release with the focus of treatment being on the immediate need for the client. Chase inquired about the need for a mental health hospital or institution. Mark responded that the topic could be brought forth with Crisis Acute Care and Adult Mental Health staff.

Danielle Sena asked if the County is planning on putting out an RFP for a medical or medically managed detox. Mark informed options are being explored and beds are in the process of being added.

Prop 47 grant funds have been applied for. The plan is to add more clinicians and peer support specialists to the team, and funds to increase residential beds. The team is also working with the Office of Care Coordination to help address barriers and get people to treatment.

Mark also provided an update regarding the Opioid Settlement. Mark went over the timeline of receipt and usage of funds since received since November 2022, including the Fentanyl is Forever Campaign, Option Response for Cities Forum, and Naloxone distribution. Cities within Orange County also received funds, which led to opportunities for partnerships with cities.

There are six high impact abatement priorities, which 50% of the funding from the settlement is expected to go towards: fund-matching for SUD facilities, new or expanded SUD infrastructure, communities of color and vulnerable populations, diversion of people with SUD from the justice system, vulnerable youth drug addiction prevention, and Naloxone distribution and expansion. There are six strategies in place: addressing the needs of criminal justice-involved persons, addressing the needs of pregnant or parenting women and their families, preventing misuse of opioids and overdose, preventing overdose deaths by implementing harm reduction strategies, expanding SUD treatment services, and expanding SUD recovery supports.

Mark shared about “Friday Night Live” a program geared toward youth to educate the youth on how to be leaders and about alcohol and drug prevention. Alan inquired about the outcome measurements for this program. Mark shared that satisfaction surveys are collected, and that the program has exceeded goals. Suggested a future presentation on the program.

Linda requested for Mark to address concerns regarding length of stay at a future meeting. Mark briefly explained how the assessment affects the length of stay. Steve requested a fact sheet that would list out all the services provided.

**BHS Tabling Events**

- Karla reminded the group about upcoming tabling events.

**Study Committee Schedule: Discuss new schedule for future meetings**

- The group discussed alternatives for future meetings including changing up meeting day and times to increase attendance for board members and the public.
- Karla reminded everyone that due to Brown ACT, members must attend in person to be active participants in the meetings. The Board members also addressed filling the open positions.

<b>11:17 a.m.</b>	<b>Public Comment</b> No public comment.	<b>Alan Albright</b>
<b>11:33 a.m.</b>	<b>Adjourn: 11:33AM</b>	<b>Alan Albright</b>

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:** September 10, 2025, 10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.