



# County of Orange Behavioral Health Advisory Board

405 W. 5th Street  
Santa Ana, CA 92701  
TEL: (714) 834-5481  
MHB Website:

<http://ochealthinfo.com/bhs/about/mhb>

## **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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## **BHAB MEMBERS**

Alan V. Albright, LMFT  
**Chair**

Frederick Williams, LMFT  
**Vice Chair**

Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento  
Second District

Cielo Echegoyen

Stephen McNally

Linda Smith

Duan Tran, MSW

Chase Wickersham

Michell Fernandez

Adela Cruz

Cecilia Vega-Gonzalez

**Wednesday, April 15, 2026**  
**4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**

### **Meeting Location:**

601 N. Ross St., (CCC Room) Santa Ana, CA 92701  
**Hybrid Option was available for members of the Public.**

### **MINUTES**

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**Members Present:** Alan Albright, Frederick Williams, Supervisor Sarmiento's Office, Cielo Echegoyen, Steve McNally, Linda Smith, Duan Tran, Chase Wickersham, Adela Cruz, Cecilia Vega-Gonzalez

**Members Absent:** Michell Fernandez

**Staff Present:** Michelle Smith, Anthony Padilla, Karla Perez, George Varela, Gabriela Saldana, Xyanya Garza, Terry Steiner, Flor Yousefian Tehrani, Sophia Valdez, Carolina O'Neill, Cheryl Seitter, Lesa Weinert, Rryan Yowell, Dr. Veronica Kelley, Michelle Smith, Brad Hutchinson, Negar Doroudian, Deana Helmy, James Kim, Anthony Le, Sharon Ishikawa, Tracy Rick, Vanessa Thomas,

### **Call to Order**

- The meeting was called to order at 4:38 p.m. by Alan Albright who then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- Each member introduced themselves.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Opening of BHSA Public Hearing**

Alan Albright opened the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Public Hearing at 4:48 p.m.

Dr. Kelley provided opening remarks. She thanked the community and BHAB for their support and input as well as HCA staff for the dedicated work in putting this plan forward. Dr. Kelley discussed the changes of MHSA to BHSA, and the significant changes to funding requirements and the now required 72 mandated services within BHSA, which ultimately led to challenging funding decisions in realigning the system to these new requirements.



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## HEALTH CARE AGENCY

**Ian Kemmer, LMFT**  
Director

Behavioral Health Services

**Karla Perez**  
Staff Specialist

Behavioral Health Services

### **Overview of Orange County's Behavioral Health Integrated Plan 2026-2029:**

Michelle Smith presented the new Behavioral Health Integrated Plan integrated plan, explaining that it serves as a 3-year roadmap for funding allocation and aligns with statewide behavioral health goals.

The plan was developed in alignment with state requirements and includes eight high-level categories outlining key investments across the system of care. The plan addresses a seventh local goal focused on preventing and treating co-occurring physical health conditions, as this was an area where the county was underperforming. Over 1,600 individuals were engaged through stakeholder meetings, focus groups and interviews conducted in multiple languages, with particular attention to historically marginalized groups. The community feedback highlighted the need for increased outreach, engagement, and cultural competence, leading to a planned \$14 million investment in enhancing access to care.

Michelle outlined key funding priorities, including wellness centers, older adult services, crisis response, and increased support for community-based organizations (CBO's), emphasizing the importance of generating Medi-Cal revenue to offset BHSA dollars. Michelle also detailed the plan allocation of \$73 million for housing interventions, including investments in interim and permanent supporting housing, and explained changes to full-service partnership programs, including the requirement to implement evidence-based programs for individuals with the highest level of care needs.

Michelle presented an overview of behavioral health services funding plans, highlighting key initiatives including a new Partnership Level 1 program for intensive case management and nearly \$15 million for targeted outreach and engagement. The discussion covered workforce development strategies, including clinical internship programs and leadership development, with plans to expand residency programs and implement apprenticeship pathways. She noted that \$800 million annual budget supports 45,000-50,000 people through 72 required programs. In addition, Michelle provided information on the community engagement events and made mentioned to the 30-day public comment and review period for local review process was completed.

Michelle reported that the plan was submitted to the Department of Healthcare Services on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, with only minor revisions required, and a 30-day public comment period was completed. Key themes from public feedback included the need to expand housing resources, particularly permanent supporting housing, and improved access to care and system navigation following crises. The next steps involve incorporating public feedback and submitting the plan to the Board of Supervisors (BOS), with an additional requirement to complete public comments and responses in the plan's appendix due to limitations in the state template. The plan is scheduled for presentation to the BOS on May 19, 2026.



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## Public Comment

- **Ms. Angkearoth Leap**  
Ms. Leap expressed her appreciation to the County for providing a platform to share her concerns. She also conveyed her concerns with the Behavioral Integrated Plan not available in Cambodian. She respectfully requested that the plan be translated into Cambodian and urged the County to translate all materials so that community members may be informed, engaged, and willing to participate.
- **Mr. Ravi Seng**  
Mr. Seng provided a recommendation for housing supports, homelessness programs, and emergency shelters for the LGBTQ+ Community including culturally affirming supports.
- **Mr. Brandon Leong**  
Mr. Leong recognized OCHCA for their community engagement efforts in developing the Integrated Plan. Recommended OCHCA contract with CBOs to contract and provide Community Health Workers (CHW) that are already trained in the field and billing Medi-Cal rather than OCHCA start their own CHW program internally. Also recommended Community-Defined Evidence Practice (CDEPS) be used for early intervention programs while leveraging some of the CDEPs already in practice throughout the State of CA.
- **Ms. Uyen Hoang**  
Ms. Hoang advocated for the LGBTQ community and expressed a need to address the deeper foundational issues of homelessness. Because the LGBTQ community has been identified as a priority, and skipped during funding allocations, Ms. Hoang is looking for genuine partnerships, clear accountability, investment, and making sure the local LGBTQ community is accounted for.
- **Ms. Raquel Drozova**  
Ms. Drozova would like to see the County expand and improve housing services and recommends equal investment in coordinating systems. This will ensure the resources are accessible, measurable and effective.
- **Ms. Virginia Arvizu**  
Ms. Arvizu recommends Orange County partner with an outside IHS agency to provide mobile services to the community.



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## **Feedback from the BHAB members:**

- Stephen McNally Recommended a more detailed plan on how HCA plans to bill Medi-Cal, including utilizing Peers for additional Medi-Cal billing services. He suggested additional discussion with CDEPS and HCA. Furthermore, he would like more information on the 72 BHSA mandated programs in the Plan. And on the Opioid Settlement program and funds. Steve also would like to hear more details on HCA's Workforce and recommended additional outreach and community education to better serve and to raise the penetration rates by 10,000 served in OC.
- Linda Smith expressed encouragement from the public comment which included increased community outreach and increased representation. Linda emphasized these themes as recurring and important to the community.
- Cesilia Vega-Gonzalez would like to see more access to food and food banks in the community, as well as more resources for the special needs community. Focusing on young adults that have turned 21 and no longer have access to school assistance and emphasized the high suicide rates in the autistic community. Cesilia is recommending a discussion pertaining to the immigrant/ undocumented community due to the lack of health insurance and the need for mental health resources for school aged children.
- Adela Cruz was encouraged to be a part of the conversation pertaining to outreach and engagement with different stakeholders, particularly schools. She would like more detailed information as to what a collaboration with schools and school districts will look like.
- Vasila from Supervisor Sarmiento's Office inquired about the 72 services included in the integrated plan and asked the following questions:  
Where is the need for these services?  
What are the residents of Orange County requesting?  
What services are being requested the most?
- Chase Wickersham Recommended community education to local businesses on Mental Health educational and support for employees.
- Cielo Echegoyen would like to have a discussion on uninsured, undocumented individuals who lack health insurance and healthcare.

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### Close of Public Hearing

- Alan Albright closed the Public Hearing at 6:33 p.m.

### Announcements:

- Next BHAB Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026,  
10:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

**Officially submitted by: Karla Perez** \*\* Note copies of all writings pertaining to items in these BHAB meetings are available for public review in the Behavioral Health Services Advisory Board Office, 05 W. 5th St., Santa Ana, CA 92701, 714.834.5481 or Email: OCBHAB@ochca.com \*\*