



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

Doug Chaffee, Chairman
Fourth District

Katrina Foley, Vice Chairwoman
Fifth District

Janet Nguyen
First District

Vicente Sarmiento
Second District

Donald P. Wagner
Third District

Wednesday, April 22, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Meeting Location:

601 N. Ross St., Santa Ana, CA 92701
Hybrid Option for members of the Public:
<https://zoom.us/j/95862491099>
Meeting ID: ID: 958 6249 1099
Call In: +1 301 715 8592

MINUTES

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BHAB MEMBERS

Alan V. Albright, LMFT
Chair

Frederick Williams, LMFT
Vice Chair

Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento
Second District

Adela Cruz

Cielo Echegoyen

Michell Fernandez

Stephen McNally

Linda Smith

Duan Tran, MSW

Cecilia Vega-Gonzalez

Chase Wickersham

Members Present: Alan Albright, Frederick Williams, Linda Smith, Stephen McNally, Chase Wickersham, Cielo Echegoyen, Cecilia Vega-Gonzalez, Michell Fernandez

Members Absent: Supervisor Sarmiento, Duan Tran, Adela Cruz,

Staff Present: Dr. Veronica Kelley, Ian Kemmer, Anthony Padilla, Karla Perez, Gabriela Saldana, George Varela, Dawn Smith, Anthony Lee, Mark Lawrez, Sharon Ishikawa, Christine Gardea

Call to Order

Alan Albright

- The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Alan Albright who then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

Fred Williams

- Cielo Echegoyen motions to approve March 25, 2025, General meeting minutes. Stephen McNally seconds. Minutes approved (8/0).
- Approval of April 15, 2026, Public Hearing minutes is currently on hold pending requested revisions.

Behavioral Health Services Update:

Ian Kemmer announced his transition from Behavioral Health Director to Assistant Deputy Director of Adult and Older Adults and shared his appreciation for this board. There is an open recruitment process underway for both the Behavioral Health Director and Deputy positions. Dr. Veronica Kelley will be the interim BHS Director and while still in her role as HCA Agency Director.

Dr. Kelley provided an update on the status and developments for the Orange/Irvine campuses. She gave a brief update on the Orange campus, including issues with Mind OC's management and the recent legal developments regarding their lease and operations. Dr. Kelley described the funding sources for the Irvine campus and ongoing disputes with Mind OC regarding building access.



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HEALTH CARE AGENCY

Dr. Veronica Kelley, LCSW
Interim Director
Behavioral Health Services

Karla Perez
Staff Specialist
Behavioral Health Services

Dr. Kelley provided an update on the new campus construction, noting that while the facility is complete and ready to serve, they are still on hold due to ongoing legal discussions with Mind OC.

Flor Yousefian Tehrani, discussed plans to develop a referral pathway for older adults in partnership with Cal Optima, further details expected next month. Chase inquired about HCA's position on AB46, to which Flor responded that HCA opposes diversion programs lacking clinical input and agreed to provide data on program usage. The meeting also covered funding concerns regarding mobile crisis services and uninsured patient reimbursement under HR1, with Dr. Kelley noting potential system adjustment if reimbursement levels change.

SB 43 Update:

By Vanessa Thomas, Crisis and Acute Care, Behavioral Health Services

Vanessa Thomas presented on the implementation of SB43, focusing on the definition of necessary medical care and the process for placing individuals on 5150 holds. She explained that law enforcement is not expected to diagnose but should observe behaviors indicating danger to self, others, or being gravely disabled. Vanessa provided Orange County's preparation efforts, including training programs for first responders and hospital partners, and the creation of a Field Quick Pocket Guide for law enforcement.

Vanessa presented data showing approximately 7,000 holds written since January 1st, with 101 SUD cases being severe (1.5% of total holds). Mark Lorenz discussed the County's voluntary SUD services, including outpatient, residential treatment, and recovery support programs, noting they serve about 800,000 Medi-Cal eligible residents.

The discussion concluded with information about designated facilities for individuals on holds, including 51 beds across three crisis stabilization units and 12 designated emergency departments, though questions about law enforcement transportation policies were tables for future discussions.

Old Business:

Alan Albright

No new nominations for BHAB Chair or BHAB Vice Chair.



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New Business:

Alan Albright

Stephen McNally makes a motion to accept current slate for Chair and Vice Chair and begins election process. Fred Williams, seconds motion. Motion passes (8,0).

Chair Election: Alan Albright is elected as the new Chair for 2026 and voted on 8/yes, 0/no.

Vice Chair Election: Linda Smith received 4 member votes, Fred Williams received 3 member votes.

Chair for 2026 is Alan Albright and Vice Chair for 2026 is Linda Smith.

BHAB in the Community:

Michelle Fernandez attended The Veteran Legion in Tustin and Santa Ana. She informed the board that The Veteran legion in Tustin has a program called “The Veteran Emergency Assistance Program” that helps veterans in crisis. It is a donation-based program.

Celicia Vega-Gonzalez attended the 7th Anniversary Celebration for United Across Borders where they fed 400 families and had a toy distribution.

Steve McNally attended the Behavioral Health Equity Committee, The Suicide Prevention Initiative, and The Same Day Solutions Fair.

Public Comment:

Fred Williams

Keith Torkelson presented a comprehensive overview of housing advisory issues, particularly focusing on room and board challenges, including quality concerns and operator issues.

Announcements:

Fred Williams

Mental Health Awareness Night will be held on Wednesday, May 12, 2026.

Fred Williams thanked BHAB for their support and congratulated Linda Smith as the new 2026 BHAB Vice Chair. Alan Albright thanked Fred for his time and dedication and encouraged Fred to continue in his work and focus on SUD issues and services, as a member.



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Adjournment:

Alan Albright adjourned meeting at 11:49am.

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, 405 W. 5th St., Santa Ana, CA 92701, 714.834.5481 or Email: OCBHAB@ochca.com* **

2026 BHAB Attendance Record General Meetings													
	MEMBER	28-Jan	25-Feb	25-Mar	22-Apr	27-May	24-Jun	22-Jul	26-Aug	23-Sep	28-Oct	25-Nov	23-Dec
1	Alan Albright	P	P	P	P								
2	Supervisor Sarmiento's Office	A	A	A	A								
3	Stephen McNally	P	P	P	P								
4	Cecilia Vega-Gonzalez	P	P	P	P								
5	Linda Smith	P	P	P	P								
6	Duan Tran	P	P	P	A								
7	Frederick Williams	P	P	P	P								
8	Chase Wickersham	P	P	P	P								
9	Michell Fernandez	P	A	P	P								
10	Adela Cruz	P	P	A	A								
11	Cielo Echegoyen		P	P	P								

P: Present

A: Absent