



# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION

**MINUTES – Approved**  
**May 21, 2026**



Salud Mental y  
Tratamiento del Uso  
de Sustancias

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

APRIL 16, 2026, 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY, 1400 EMELINE, ROOMS 206-207, SANTA CRUZ 95060  
MICROSOFT TEAMS (831) 454-2222, CONFERENCE 955 693 524#

Present: Dean Kashino, Jeffrey Arlt, Michael Neidig, Natalie Stott, Rachel Montoya, Valerie Webb, Xaloc Cabanes, Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa  
Absent: Antonio Rivas, Hugh McCormick (public member), Kaelin Wagnermarsh  
Staff: Marni Sandoval, Amy Rhoades, Danielle Long, Jane Batoon-Kurovski

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- I. Roll Call – Quorum present. Meeting called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Chair Xaloc Cabanes. Note: Hugh McCormick’s term expired April 1, 2026. Reappointment scheduled for the April 28, 2026 BOS meeting. Attendance is noted as a public member.
  - II. Public Comment – 1 individual addressed the BHAB in the conference room.
  - III. Board Member Announcements
    - Wellness Walk held March 28<sup>th</sup> at Sky Park in Scotts Valley – well attended with different activities.
    - Mike shared the psychotic break response in Capitola involving law enforcement and BH staff - had a positive outcome. Jeff noted that early involvement of BH crisis teams and use of 988/county crisis lines can reduce county response costs, support BHSA early intervention goals.
    - Natalie asked for clarification on the Board’s role in supporting youth and adolescents, including whether substance use disorder and psychiatric services are available specifically for youth.
  - IV. Approve March 19, 2026 Minutes  
Motion / Second: Mike Neidig / Dean Kashino  
Ayes: Kashino, Arlt, Neidig, Stott, Montoya, Webb, Cabanes, De Serpa  
Nays: None  
Abstain: McCormick  
Passed.
  - V. Secretary’s Report
    - New annual cycle for training and attendance has begun.
    - Terms expiring in April 2027: Kaelin, Valerie and Rachel.
  - VI. Patient’s Rights Report – George Carvalho, Advocate for Advocacy, Inc.  
March report was provided. George attended the meeting.
    - Telecare facility is temporarily down 6 beds due to flood damage. Repairs could take months due to asbestos inspections, dry wall repair, etc.
    - Hope Forward update - there have been 8 contacts, with no admissions.
    - Clarified that minors up to age 18 will be the primary client, not the parent, with considerations around consent and parental involvement.
  - VII. Board of Supervisor’s Report – Supervisor Kimberly De Serpa
    - County faces \$24M deficit; departments are implementing hiring freezes.

- Toured 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue facility, a 99-bed facility for conserved individuals awaiting transition to next placement in community.
- Testified before legislators in support of allowing the County to exceed the half-cent sales tax cap to support health care and BH programs. The proposed measure would help address funding deficits within HSA and social services programs, including food security initiatives.
- The Governor's May Revision budget proposal is expected to be released on May 5.

VIII. Behavioral Health Director's Report – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health Director

1. Adults Behavioral Health Update

- Bridge House will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 21, 2026. The Bridge House Project is expected to open in mid-April.

2. Children's Behavioral Health Update

- Hope Forward | Esperanza Adelante Youth Crisis Center opened on April 2, 2026. It is currently operating at 50% capacity with 4 chairs available for use. Since opening, the unit has diverted 14 youth from hospitalization through voluntary admissions and involuntary holds.

3. Substance Use Disorder Services Update

- The RENEWPath Program enrolled 52 participants. During first site visit, the commission provided positive reviews, especially regarding the men's and women's recovery residences, noting the women's residence as the first funded program dedicated to women.
- Recovery Incentives program received positive reviews during first monitoring visit.
- DUI program providers identified: Sobriety Works and Alert Driving, Inc. The programs open for enrollment in the next 6 months.
- SUBG Block grant – bi-annual application is open, hoping to continue to receive funds to support programming.

4. Other Updates / Clarification

- MHCAN has a fully appointed board who are reviewing financials and exploring short-term local partnerships for fiscal sponsorship, as well as the clubhouse model, to support reopening efforts. The primary goal is to reopen the program and refocus it with MHCAN's original mission of providing peer support for individuals living with mental health conditions.
- BH provides a full continuum of substance use disorder services for Medi-Cal members under age 18, including withdrawal management, residential care, intensive outpatient care, outpatient care, medication-assisted treatment/NTP, early intervention, recovery support services, and prevention services. Muir Wood is a contracted provider of youth residential treatment services located outside Santa Cruz County (including Sonoma and Fresno counties), used when residential-level care is needed. All other services are delivered by local providers within Santa Cruz County: Encompass Youth Services, Janus of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Community Health.

Presentation: Behavioral Health Services Act Public Comment Hearing - Formal close of public comment.

- This is a funding source that is intended to be used to supplement all the other behavioral health funding sources to ensure that gaps are filled in the continuum of mandated care.
- Approximately 50 public comments were received. All comments will be reviewed and considered. Final plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in June for approval.

Public Comments

1. Stephanie Barron-Lu from Positive Discipline Community Resources (PDCR) requested consideration for inclusion in the roadmap, highlighting its evidence-based, positive discipline parent programming for parents, youth, and educators. Services include free trainings, workshops, and support programs offered in English, Spanish, and Mixteco, with expansion into additional Indigenous languages. Stephanie emphasized its focus on parent competency, connection-centered approaches, and advancing linguistic and geographic inclusion priorities.
2. BHSA Integrated Plan Ad Hoc Committee Public Comment  
Key discussion points included improving the overall penetration rates, particularly among Latinx and unhoused populations, expanding use of community health workers and peer support services, and exploring partnerships with statewide ECM providers. Members also supported centralized access and outreach strategies, emphasized program approach for high-acuity

populations given the difficulty to stand up facilities, and highlighted the importance of re-engagement strategies for individuals who discontinue treatment.

Accept the BHSA Integrated Plan Ad Hoc Committee comments as the comments of the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board.

Motion / Second: Jeffrey Arlt / Dean Kashino

Ayes: Kashino, Arlt, Neidig, Sott, Montoya, Webb, Cabanes, De Serpa

Nays: None

Abstain: McCormick

Passed.

IX. Site Visit Committee Update

- El Dorado Center is a 15-bed, community-based short-term treatment facility supporting step-down care for individuals transitioning from locked settings back to the community. The program is consistently near or at capacity and provides counseling, structured activities, community outings, and skills training focused on activities of daily living and independent living. The visit reinforced the ongoing need for additional step-down options.
- Committee is considering returning to Juvenile Hall for the next site visit.

X. Jail Packet - Hugh McCormick

- Jail packet serves as a guide for friends and families of incarcerated individuals navigating the criminal justice system.
- Clarified there are improvements in access to medication since the transition from Wellpath to NaphCare, though some issues remain.
- The board requested future discussion on collaborative courts and expanded access to related resources, including improving accessibility in the waiting room.
- Other feedback - add more information regarding mental health care, including crisis intervention like MERT(Y).

XI. Appointment of Nominating Committee for Officer Elections

Ad Hoc Committee was established to propose candidates for Board officer positions. Volunteers for this committee – Valerie, Dean, Natalie

XII. Future Agenda Items – None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:49p.m.