

RIVERSIDE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES FOR March 4, 2026 • 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS –

Madam Chair Brenda Scott called the Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) meeting to order at 12:00 pm. Commissioner attendance was taken by roll call and followed by introductions.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING –

Greg Damewood made a motion to approve minutes as written from February 4, 2026 and Victoria St. Johns seconded the motion.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS – Madam Chair Brenda Scott, announced she went to a county meeting last week that included California Health and Human Services. The topic was the CARE Act in Riverside and the CARE Court Judge who was present. Madam Chair shared the meeting showed the departments involvement and wanted to commend the County for all their effort and dedication that goes into the great work they do and helping families with their loved ones.

COMMISSION MEMBER REMARKS – Victoria St. Johns announced the Public Hearing was held in Coachella Valley and praised Diana Gutierrez and her team for the great work they did involving that, stated it was well attended and a lot of the public members shared their feedback and gave comment.

Greg Damewood shared he and Daryl Terrell attending the Public Hearing held in Moreno Valley and it went well. He also shared he attended the Family Services Conference in Riverside and encouraged others to visit the facility.

PUBLIC REMARKS – Kristen Duffy announced the annual May is Mental Health Month event will take place on May 14, 2026 at Fairmount Park from 11:30am to 3:30pm and encouraged everyone to attend and invite others to join. She shared that flyers will be shared soon.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Dr. Matthew Chang

Dr. Chang expressed the department has been working very hard on continuum of care and proud of the work the department has done. He announced the unsheltered population has gone down by 19% which is six times the state average and best improvement throughout the state. He also shared the death toll of the unsheltered population has gone down by 30%. Dr. Chang expressed the department is incredibly grateful to the state for their support and the Beechum funds and will continue to work closely with the state. He concluded by announcing the promotion of Melissa Noone to Deputy Director.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY- Parent Support (Maria Arnold)

Maria Arnold, Parent Support Program Manager, introduced Karla Rivera Mora, Certified Peer Support Specialist with Parent Support. Mrs. Mora shared the challenges she and her family faced when they moved to California from Ensenada due to her husband's job promotion. She described the difficulties of being far from friends and family, the process of seeking support and resources for her daughter who was experiencing mental health challenges and the role their culture played in understanding and addressing those needs. Mrs. Mora explained that just as her daughter began receiving appropriate support, the COVID-19 pandemic began and limited available resources.

Soon after, her husband was hospitalized due to contracting COVID-19 and later passed away due to complications. She suddenly found herself in a foreign country with no family, no friends, unemployed, and without medical benefits. Despite these hardships, Mrs. Mora continued advocating for her daughter's mental health and seeking support for herself. She found assistance through Children's Behavioral Health, where her daughter was able to continue receiving services, and she was later introduced to Parent Support services for her own needs. Encouraged by those who supported her, she became involved in helping others and is now a Certified Peer Support Specialist with Parent Support. Mrs. Mora shared she finds joy in supporting others on their healing journey. She concluded by sharing her children are now thriving, her son is active in sports, and her daughter is employed and attending college.

NEW BUSINESS-

1. **Wellness Village Presentation – Dr. Chang**

Dr. Chang provided a presentation on the Mead Valley Wellness Village, please see power point link below.

<https://www.ruhealth.org/media/9531>

OLD BUSINESS-

1. **Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Update - (Diana Gutierrez)**

Diana Gutierrez, MH Services Administrator, announced the integrated plan has been posted on the website for public review and comment. She continued by sharing there are three in person public hearings, as well as a virtual option and call in number so that the public can call in to share their comments after reviewing the plan if they'd like. Mrs. Gutierrez shared there will be an Ad-Hoc committee held soon, including the commissioners who volunteered at the public hearings to discuss since the first draft of the plan is to be submitted by March 31, 2026. She concluded by announcing once the plan has been approved it will be sent to the BOS to meet the June 30th deadline.

2. **Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program (SAPT) Update – (April Frey and Heidi Gomez)**

April Frey, SAPT Administrator, announced the next Providers meeting will be held on March 19, 2026 at the Moreno Valley Conference Center and the upcoming ROC (Recovery Opportunity Center) tournament.

Heidi Gomez, SAPT Administrator, announced ASAM is in the next phase and the fourth addition to be implemented will include restructuring of consumer services and level of care.

3. **Care Court Update – (Marcus Cannon)**

Marcus Cannon, Deputy Director of Forensics, provided a brief update on CARE Court. Please see power Point presentation below.

<https://www.ruhealth.org/media/9536>

COMMITTEE UPDATE –

April Smith announced the Legislative Meeting was held yesterday 3/3/26 and discussed Prop 1.

Rick Gentillalli announced the Veterans meeting was cancelled today but will meet again in May.

Brenda Scott announced the Ad Hoc committees formed have met and announced the upcoming meeting for Mid County is scheduled for 3/5/26.

Victoria St. Johns announced the Children’s Committee met and the Desert Art Show will be held on 5/12/26.

Greg Damewood announced the Western Regional Advisory Board meeting met last month at Blaine Street Clinic and well attended with 10 public members and will meet again today 3/4/26.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS-

Greg Damewood requested overview of RUHS Foundation.

MHRC update suggested by Brenda Scott.

Franklin Center presentation requested.

ADJOURN – The Behavioral Health Commission meeting adjourned at 1:49 pm.

Sylvia Bishop

Sylvia Bishop, Recording Secretary

Minutes and agendas of meetings are available online at:
<http://www.ruhealth.org/behavioral-health/advisory-committees>

To request copies, please contact the BHC Liaison at 951-955-7141
or email SBishop@ruhealth.org

FY 2025/26 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION ATTENDANCE ROSTER

| MEMBERS | JUL | SEP | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| April Smith, District | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |
| Beatriz Gonzalez, District 4 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |
| Brenda Scott, District 3 | P | P | P | A | P | P | P | | | |
| Carole Schaudt, District 4 | P | P | A | A | A | A | A | | | |
| Daryl Terrell, District 5 | P | P | P | P | A | P | P | | | |
| Elysse Rico, BOS Rep. Dist. 2 | P | P | P | P | P | A | P | | | |
| Greg Damewood, District 5 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |
| Launa Wilson, District 1 | A | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |
| Quintilia Ávila, District 2 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |
| Rick Gentillalli, District 5 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |
| Sheila Mallet-Smith, Dist. 3 | P | A | P | P | P | P | A | | | |
| Victoria St. Johns, District 4 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |
| Dr. Walter Haessler, Dist. 3 | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | |

Present = P • Absent = A

| PRESENT In Person / Present Virtual | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Deborah Johnson | Peter Paul | Sonai Gomez | Mary Carpio |
| Dr. Chang | Andy Mary | Jane Beamer | Felix Gbagbo |
| Sylvia Bishop | Monique Maldonado | Tyrone Peterson | Melissa Vasquez |
| Lucy Lopez | Karla Rivera | Misty Martin | Elizabeth Delrio |
| Israel Torres | Cathy Applebee | Carina Gustafsson | Karen Franks |
| Kristen Duffy | Socorro Gomez | Kami Winston | Sandy Awad |
| Melissa Noone | Alicia Arredondo | Manuel Medina | Robert Youssef |
| Don Kendrick | Elena Martinez | Shannon McCleerey-Hooper | Laurence Gonzaga |
| Nisha Elliott | Dani Damewood | Alvaro Segura | Ye Jee Yoshimura |
| Silvia Silva | | Sheila Mallett-Smith | |
| Maria Arnold | | Leah Newell | |
| April Frey | | Orli Zaprir | |
| Heidi Gomez | | Aj | |
| Marcus Cannon | | Rachel Gileno | |
| Rhyan Miller | | Aaron Perez | |
| Diana Gutierrez | | Laren Adamson | |
| Amy McCann | | Alicia Garcia | |
| Lupe Madrigal | | Amelia Diaz | |
| Travis Queen | | Nosheen Samuel | |