

RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM-BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
Mid-County Region Behavioral Health Advisory Board
Thursday, April 2, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT		GUEST PRESENT
Walter T. Haessler, M.D Brenda Scott Dr. Vernita Black Dolores DeMartino Martiza Camacho (via TEAMS)	Ramon Amado	Beverly McKeddie Sheree Glidden Donna Sliva Tony Ortego (via TEAMS) Debbie Woodworth Melissa Vasquez Steven Willis (via TEAMS)	Lacy Fourong (via TEAMS) Tracy Dewing (via TEAMS) Elizabeth Lagunas Erica Tadeo Cherylyn Klemens Lauren Adamson (via TEAMS)	Erik L. Kelli S. (via TEAMS) Isabel F. Thomas S.

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION/FOLLOW UP
Call To Order and Introductions	Brenda Scott called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. All in attendance introduced themselves.	
Minutes	The March 5 th , 2026, meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted.	
Public Comments	A member shared her current firsthand experience of being homeless and the struggles that come with that, including the lack of resources and people being knowledgeable as to what is available to the community. She shared that there's a need for more ideas, more resources, more support and to come together to plan and help individuals who want to help themselves get out of homelessness. She voiced her frustration in that to expect individuals to just function like a normal human being without having their basic needs met, and psychology specifically states how housing is a basic need, and just not having that access and expecting someone to just go to work and just perform and function like a normal person. In her opinion, that is one of the barriers that needs improvement. Brenda sympathized with her and shared that NAMI receives calls all the time from people who are homeless and acknowledged that there are not a lot of resources. She explained that they will give them the home connect number to call. Brenda suggested that there is a housing committee that she could join and learn a little bit more about housing and the county's approach and maybe why there are some barriers and understand more about some of the resources that are out there. Brenda also mentioned the upcoming changes to MHSA or BHSA at the state level, that there was roughly a billion dollars that went to the state for housing to be divided up amongst the different counties and there is a lot of stuff in the works, including that there will be 400 beds at the Wellness Village that should be done at the end of this year or beginning of next year.	
Announcements	→ The May is Mental Health Month (MiMHM) event will be held on May 14th from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm at Fairmount Park in Riverside. This will be the only event this year. → Dolores shared that on April 11th there is a Youth Symposium at Temecula Valley Hospital for ages 14 to 18. → On April 15th at 6:00 pm our speaker's meeting is being held at Temecula Valley Hospital. The subject is Mental Health Court, so if you have any family members that would like to know more about mental health court, we have Willard Wynn and Maritza Camacho come and present.	

Announcements (Continued)	→Then in April, there's a Spanish in person support group class that starts and that's in Perris called Familia de Familia. → The John J. Benoit Behavioral Health Arts Festival Art Show & Creative Writing Contest will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, from 11 am to 2 pm at the Taj Mahal Building, Riverside County Fairgrounds 82-503 Hwy 111, Indio, California 92201. The art show allows members of the department receiving services to display their art as well as putting them up for sale. → On April 9th from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm, the TAY arena located at 2560 N. Perris Blvd. N-1, Perris, CA 92571, will be hosting their 2nd Annual Spring Into Hope event. The community is welcome to come. It's free for anyone to attend. We will be serving pizza, cotton candy and popcorn, etc. for families. We'll also be having a food box distribution until they run out. We have over 40 vendors signed up to be in attendance. We will have a ton of resources, Easter activities and opportunity prize drawings.	
Correspondence	No correspondence received or reported.	
New Business- Parent Support & Training	Cherylyn Klemens gave a presentation on the Parent Support & Training program within RUHS. Cherylyn spoke about their program which consists mainly of parent partners, who are parents who have lived experience with a child (or children) who's had their own behavioral health diagnosis and qualifies them to be parent partners. We've walked these roads ourselves to get our kids the help and treatment they need. Cherylyn then described in detail her life situation. She explained that she has two sons. They are adults now, but when they were little, she had no one. She thought everything was normal because she didn't know what normal looked like. She recalled her mother-in-law would say "oh they act just like their dad" and her mother would say "Oh my gosh my kids never acted like that." I didn't know until my youngest son was initially diagnosed with autism when he was three. She was suddenly aware and then they were off to the races. Suddenly both of my kids had a lot of letters after their name. It didn't make them a doctor. They've got a lot of different diagnoses and at that time, she was navigating these systems and had no experience. This was not her world. Then there's schools and IEP's and just trying to function in everyday life. Even when you have a child with autism try taking them for a haircut with sensory issues. Everything was a brand-new challenge and so for me when I was a young mom and I had these two boys and I thought I went into the world anytime I was alone for 5 minutes I cried my eyes out because I didn't know what I was doing right. This was extremely hard and I didn't have people around me who had the same life experience. So long story short, my children are now grown adults. They're 30 and 31, they're both married. They both made me a grandmother. They have fantastic careers and they're successful men, but it was a climb every single day. They still struggle with those things because those things don't go away but we've had to fight every day for the last 31 years. I do understand what it's like for other parents who are feeling the exact same way getting this diagnosis and feeling as if their life is over, which is the point of the Parent Support and Training Program. It was started back in the early 1990's by a mom (just like me) who thought she needed to help someone else do this, which was ultimately my motivation. I had a lot of other careers before this, but I thought I at least wanted to help someone else through the darkness and so that's kind of our motto. We want to help other people and get them through to the light at the end of the tunnel.	

New Business – Parent Support & Training (Continued)	Parent Support and Training Program offer a variety of parenting classes which are free to the community. They are all portable classes, so when parents find themselves in need, either from the school districts telling them to do something or the court is making them take classes or you're in the substance abuse program or CPS has been at your front door. We offer all types of classes that are necessary for your specific needs. Again, we have lived experience with having our own kids having IEP's and all those other fun things that you get to go through at school, so we support parents through those things. We also have parent partners that specialize in housing needs, who work specifically with families who are homeless and have a whole new set of needs as opposed to a single person. Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment programs (SAPT) also have parent partners located in the DRC's. For our early release people, we're going to be there explaining everything. We've traditionally been inside schools. We've been anywhere that anyone would have or allow us. With BHSA, there are some changes coming to our program as well as everything else. The change from MHSA to BHSA in the Parent Support program is that they've taken that prevention piece and now that we're still going strong with early interventions, we are just swiveling and we are moving and returning. We're implementing some new programs for us so we will still be out in the community meeting the needs of those parents. Just because the laws have changed and just because funding has changed, doesn't mean people's situations have changed. We still want to be there and meet them where they are because they can walk in our office anytime and there will be a parent partner who's there to help them. They can walk in our office anytime and there will be a parent partner who's there to help them be that light at the end of the tunnel. We encourage you to invite us to any of your clinics in any of your programs. If you don't have a parent partner, let us know because we'd love to come and support the families. We're not traditionally in adult clinics because that's not where the children are, but we still have parents who are in adult clinics who might need support. Feel free to reach out to us for support to all your families.	
Old Business	No old business items were discussed.	
Administrator/Managers Report	Beverly McKeddie, Behavioral Health Services Administrator – Children's Programs - passed around a map of the new Wellness Village for the group to see. She recently took a tour of the facility and was able to take a couple of videos that she will share and have them sent out attached as an e-mail so that everyone can see them firsthand. She was able to tour the children's building, to see the family apartment quarters, for those who can stay on site while their children are in mental health urgent care. We saw where staff are going to be working doing outpatient and field-based services. The Wellness building at the front is the one that's most open to the community and we're going to have space for our consumers and our community to come in and rest in meeting rooms. There is a full-service kitchen, which is next to the market so there are grab and go meal options for those who are there as well as those who are visiting family members. We were able to tour the two- and three-bedroom residences, which already had refrigerators and microwaves. The landscaping is amazing. There will also be a pet hotel, which is a great idea because for a lot of those who have housing instability and they don't want to get into a certain housing because they have a dog or an animal and they're not going to leave their animal. Beverly shared that she was curious about how parking is going to work because when she saw the size of these buildings and the number of offices and the number of residences, which all come with cars, she felt as though parking is going to be a premium. The hope is that a parking garage will be built to accommodate everyone.	

Administrator/Managers Report (Continued)	To celebrate our members, we are planning to do small events, not on the scale of May is Mental Health Month event, but in the clinics and at our centers so that we are celebrating with our consumers and celebrating their recovery as well as inviting the community and more of an open house type of setting, in the parking lot area blocked off with fun activities engaged with the kids so that the staff can enjoy some celebration. We continue to partner with IEHP and work on introducing their kids to county level services that can keep kids in their home communities. Because we know from multiple studies kids do better when they stay in their own community as opposed to being somewhere else (residential treatment) and then brought back. So, we meet every Thursday morning to review family requests and offer several county level options/services, which can be programs from 9 to 3 or from 3 to 6, five days a week for kids. Then we also meet with Regional Center monthly to review those cases that are having struggles or challenges navigating through both systems and getting their needs met. Over the last few months, we've re-engaged with them and most recently there were two children on the agenda whose situations were quite concerning, both six years old and struggling to navigate the system. They have health services, Regional Center, and school supports, so this dialogue is helpful, because oftentimes these young people will slide through education and not necessarily in the way education is set up. We will put kids who are intellectually disabled in an emotionally disturbed setting. They then manifest those behaviors, and they never really get tested or identified for the lifelong services at regional center. So, to have this dialogue and catch it earlier, I think it's important because we're seeing so many of our younger consumers who have slid through identified as emotionally disturbed when in fact there's a neurodevelopmental disorder to prenatal exposure or there's some undiagnosed intellectual disability. So, they're not getting the services and the support they should have. It's difficult to get 21/22-year-olds through that process and it's supposed to have been done before the age of 16. Tony Ortego, Behavioral Health Services Administrator for Mature Adults, shared that in Mid-County there are four mature adult clinics. They serve members who are 59 and older and our clinics are located in Temecula, Lake Elsinore, San Jacinto and Perris. Our FSP (full-service partner) members, who have much more acute symptoms and need more intense treatment, are provided at least weekly services if not more. All our clients have what we consider moderate to severe mental health challenges. In all four of our clinics, we have (just like most of the other outpatient clinics) psychiatrists, nurses, clinical therapists, behavioral health specialists, peer support staff, and community service assistants (who help with transportation as a lot of our population have difficulties in this area), and lastly we actually have one family advocate. We work very closely with Enhanced Care Management as a majority of our members have a lot of current physical health issues. We also work very closely with our Behavioral Health Housing program because unfortunately we are seeing a much larger increase in older adults facing homelessness and can be found living in their cars. I believe 70 and over is one of those preferred categories for expedited housing resources. With the cost of living going up in California, we've seen them making \$1200.00 a month on Social Security and right now you can't rent a room for under \$1000. With prices escalating, our older population is getting priced out. Lacy Fourong, Behavioral Health Services Supervisor for the SAPT Program, shared We've experienced an increase in caseloads across the board. So, Perris Substance Abuse clinic is now at 224 on their caseload and they have two staff vacancies, a TAP Office Assistant and a Behavioral Health Specialist III. They have a Peer going through the onboarding process who will start soon. The San Jacinto clinic caseload is now at 279. They have two	
---	---	--

Administrator/Managers Report (Continued)	vacancies, a Peer and an Office Assistant II. At the Lake Elsinore clinic, we are holding steady at 209 members and have one Office Assistant III vacancy. Lastly, our Temecula site is holding steady at 159 on their caseload and they have one vacancy, a Community Services Assistant. There is a collaborative meeting that three of our programs do here in Lake Elsinore, which consists of the older adults, regular adults and SAPT clinics. We all come together monthly with supervisors and administrators. We expect that our staff will dialogue on shared cases regularly and make sure that we encourage that of the entire care team to be sure nobody's working against one another but working alongside each other and with the consumer to make progress on the case. We've seen an uptick on the SAPT side of co-occurring and/or dual diagnosis consumers, so we're just making sure that we get proper linkage/proper care and the whole person care for our individuals. I do believe that the collaborative meetings are successful. We're seeing a lot more consultations and working together with the teams. We have our prevention team, which is a team of four substance abuse counselors that go into schools. We have about 12 schools and approximately 119 students that we serve, so prevention is not treatment but a preventative level of care. We were just recently recognized by the Lake Elsinore Unified School District for all the hard work that the staff have done. So, I just wanted to shout out the team here in this forum as well. We are looking forward to seeing what kind of summer fun events we can create for our students who will be out of school such as a bowling event, a movie day, or an art or music day. If they're on site at the clinic, you know, go to the park and throw a Frisbee or a ball around. We're just trying to get creative to keep people engaged. We also collaborate with the Friday Night Live program. Regarding the Wellness Center in Mead Valley, we're looking forward to seeing how that can also help us for linkage purposes, to housing, to access detox and residential centers.	
Committee Reports	Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) – Brenda reported on the Behavioral Health Commission meeting. Doctor Chang was not there so he was not able to give us an update. There was a speaker. She grew up in foster care and has had six children. She told us her story about how she lost her kids to the system. She now has I believe she said four of her kids back with her. It was a very touching story. She talked about how much the department helped her with everything. Somebody asked her if she would consider maybe even becoming a peer support specialist someday? You know because a lot of times folks who have just incredible stories like hers really are great advocates and really care about the people and the stuff that they've been through as they've been through it too. Diana gave us a BHSA update and Care Court updates. There was also a presentation on the Franklin Residential Care Facility. The 84-bed Adult Residential Facility fills a critical gap in behavioral health and recovery services for adults who need structured support. It is located at 3021 Franklin Ave. in Riverside. The newly renovated 42,000-square-foot facility will provide residential care, outpatient behavioral health services and short-term recuperative care to help individuals regain stability and transition toward independent living. The Franklin Residential Care Facility will offer housing, meals, personal care assistance, medication management and supervision to individuals who require structured support without the need for 24-hour nursing care. The facility provides recuperative care services for individuals recovering from hospitalization or behavioral health crises. An on-site outpatient behavioral health clinic will provide therapy, medication services, and case management for both residents and the surrounding community. Medical oversight, transportation to follow-up care and assistance in accessing benefits and stable housing are additional essential services offered.	

Committee Reports (Continued)	The renovations to the Franklin facility feature welcoming areas to promote recovery, including multi-purpose rooms, and exercise and outdoor recreation space. A commercial kitchen and dining area will provide daily meals. A nurse's station, medication room and consultation spaces ensure continuous support as residents build life skills and transition toward independent living. <u>Membership Committee</u> – Brenda shared that they didn't meet as there were no potential members. There was one potential member for Western Riverside, but she hasn't shown up for the three meetings that she's supposed to attend. <u>Children's Committee</u>- No new information was shared regarding this committee. <u>Criminal Justice Committee</u> – Dolores shared that overall, it was a short meeting but that there was a discussion surrounding the implementation of SB 43. Under that, there is a new code which is 5270.15. If a member is placed on a 5150 hold (up to 72 hours), the member will receive a crisis evaluation and short-term support. If more care is needed, a 5250 hold (up to 14 days) or the new 5270.15 hold (up to 30 days) may follow, with legal safeguards in place. <u>Older Adults Committee</u> – Brenda shared that the committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 12:00. Next week's meeting will be held at their clinic in Desert Hot Springs. I'm going to try to go in person to that one because I haven't been to that clinic before. <u>Adult System of Care Committee</u> – Brenda shared that the committee met on March 26th at the Lake Elsinore Adult BH Clinic. There was an informative presentation by Take My Hand on their new app relaunch and being the first web-based (text) service with a real person (Peer Support) on the other end of the conversation, to be there for a person who may not be open to in-person or telephone verbal communication. <u>Housing Committee</u> – Brenda shared that the committee meets the second Tuesday of the month and the next one is coming up on April 14th and will be over zoom. This is due to the building we use (Rustin Conference Center in Riverside) being out of commission. Hopefully it will be up and running in June of this year. <u>Legislative Committee</u> – Dr. Haessler shared the next Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for May 6th and is always the first Wednesday every other month at 10:30 am at different locations and is well attended virtually. Dr. Haessler wanted to clear up some misinformation that was shared at our last meeting. He explained that the current law imposes specified requirements on applicants for certification as a peer support specialist, including that the applicant be at least 18 years of age and possess a high school diploma or equivalent degree (GED). This new bill (AB 96) would remove the requirement of possessing a high school diploma or equivalent degree from the requirements necessary for an applicant to receive certification. <u>Veterans Committee</u> – Dr. Vernita Black reported that the Veterans Committee canceled last month and are scheduled to meet every other month, so they will resume in May.	
--	--	--

Next Meeting	The next scheduled Mid-County Regional Advisory Board meeting is set for Thursday, May 7th, 2026, at the Hemet Adult BH Clinic, 650 N. State St, Hemet CA 92543.	Next meeting scheduled for May 7th, 2026.
Adjournment	The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.	

Mid-County Region Behavioral Health Advisory Meeting Attendance												
Calendar Year 2026												
Members	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Walter Haessler, M.D.	X	X	X	X								
2. Brenda Scott	X	X	X	X								
3. Dr. Vernita Black	A	X	X	X								
4. Don Kendrick	A	X	X	A								
5. Dolores DeMartino	X	X	X	X								
6. Ramon Amado	A	A	A	A								
7. Maritza Camacho	A	A	A	X								