

MEETING MINUTES**03/10/2026**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tori St Johns; Chairperson, Dr. Janice Quinn; Vice-Chairperson, Jim Jones, Huynh Cuc Nguyen, Eva Guenther-James, Joe Butts, Bruce Sherr, Bea Gonzalez

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Richard Divine, Mark Miller, Carole Schaudt, Maura Fisher

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT: Rachel Gileno; Adult Services Administrator, Shawn Harris; Senior Parent Partner; Parent Support & Training Program - Desert Region, Elizabeth Aguilar; Family Advocate, RUHS - BH, Jay Rembold; Senior Peer Support Specialist, RUHS — BH, Gabe Kason, Indio SAPT, Anthony Morgan, Desert SAPT, Victor Nate Ramirez, RUHS Older Adults, Ashley Jean, PSRC, Maria Swanson, Artworks

OTHERS PRESENT: Seham Saba, Latino Commission, Charles Richardson, Amber Duffle, George Thomstad, Kathy Myers

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND SELF INTRODUCTIONS:

Tori St Johns called the meeting of the Riverside County Desert Behavioral Health Board to order at 12:08 PM. Self-introductions of all who were in attendance in person or by teleconference followed.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. Quinn announced that Mark Miller had been in a car accident and thankfully was alive but with a badly broken arm and having surgery to fix it.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Limit 3 minutes per speaker):

None.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Tori St Johns asked if there were any additions, corrections, or deletions to the board minutes of the February 10, 2026 meeting. There were no additions, corrections or deletions that needed to be made. Bea Gonzalez made a motion to accept the minutes, Bruce Sherr seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS

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LATINO COMMISSION 2026 UPDATE:

Bea Gonzalez introduced Seham Saba, LMFT who is the Deputy Director for the Riverside Latino Commission Counseling Center. Seham Saba then gave a presentation detailing the mental health and alcohol abuse programs offered through their Services.

The Latino Commission Counseling Center has services for all ages, including residential treatment homes for both Men – Michaels House, and Women – Bea’s House. They also have a new Detox Home where clients can stay up to 10 days, and a teenager substance prevention program. Services they provide include: Systems of Care program with Crisis being seen the same day, wrap-around services, Community health, and soon Psychological Testing. They serve 23 School Districts. Clients can be seen as walk-in, same day crisis, doctors referral, IEHP. Three insurances are accepted. Services are open to anyone not just the Latino Community.

DESERT BOARD DUTIES/ACTIVITIES TO VOTE ON REACTIVATING OR REVISING TO REACTIVATE

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH PROCLAMATION PICKUPS

For over twenty years prior to losing the previous Board Liaison all the cities in the Desert and throughout Riverside County would be notified by the Board Liaison to officially proclaim May is Mental Health Month and hand out a Proclamation to one of the Behavioral Health Board Members during their monthly City Council Meeting. The Board Member would be given 3 minutes to tell some facts about Mental Health and how it affects the community. Board Members reported that this interaction with the City Council and attending public was always well received and went far to educate the public and reduce stigma. The Board voted to reactivate this recognition of May is Mental Health Month and will help start the process back up for next year.

SITE VISITS FOR ALL DESERT PROGRAMS BY DESERT BOARD MEMBERS

Over twenty years ago the Desert Board created the concept of Site Visit Reviews by board our members, of the programs offered by Riverside County. The idea was to educate the Board on what services were available and to determine if the Staff and the Consumers were getting all they needed, and determine if the program could use some help or needed some changes. The Desert Board Members created an instruction page and a 2 page form with questions to ask or answer from their visit. Everyone involved felt this was helpful and Site Visit Reviews were adopted by the other 3 boards which included the Main Board (now called the Commission). The Desert Board updated the questions and instructions years later then eventually stopped doing the Site Visit Reviews replacing them with On Site Board Meetings where the entire board would attend, and with having a representative for the programs present to the Board.

The Main Board/Commission members enjoyed the Site Visits and continued to do them enlarging their review base to include all the regions programs not just those in the city of Riverside. They now want to assign Site Reviews to Desert Board Members. Dr. Quinn proposed that the Desert Board take back over and update the concept of Site Reviews focusing on the newer Desert Programs that could still and would still be open to input and updating the language and questions on the forms. The Board voted to take this project on to update the Site Visit Reviews Concept and Forms.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS: None

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OLD BUSINESS:

REGIONAL BOARDS BYLAWS REVISION PROGRESS UPDATE

Tori St. Johns reported that the Rustin Building is still closed and may re-open in the Summer 2026. She said the Commission Bylaws Committee had submitted their revised bylaws to County Council. Dr Quinn noted that the Bylaws were not passed by the regional boards for review. Tori said that the regional boards were supposed to have an opportunity to see the bylaws prior to having them sent to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

MAY JOHN J. BENOIT ART FESTIVAL UPDATE & WINDOW WALK GALLERY UPDATE

Dr. Janice Quinn said the Taj Mahal was confirmed for the Art Show. During the Committee meeting it was reported by the various clinic representatives that a lot of good art was being created. Ashley Jean from the Peer Center has been working on several Creative Writing projects and her writers are excited to have their writing in the Show. The PSRC has done an amazing storyboard poem using candy. Dr Quinn said the creativity was fun and impressive!

Other Old Business: None.

MONTHLY UPDATE AND REPORT

Substance Abuse Program Update:

Gabe Kason reported that the Big Room "Boneyard" of old furniture at their new offices had been completely cleared out. They now have 3 group rooms, 11 offices on one side and 6 offices on the other. DHS has a new Supervisor. All members are now getting text message appointment reminders. A really big happening is that their Counselors are going to a 2 day training put on by Hazelden.

Peer Support and Resource Center:

Tabled until June 9, 2026 meeting.

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Program Update:

Going really strong with groups. Took them to Idyllwild for a hike and got some great photos. Started Cooking Clubs. Artists working on art pieces for the Art Show.

CHILDRENS SERVICES MANAGER COMMENTS:

Rachel Gileno announced that Kelly Grotsky was promoted to Deputy Director replacing Bill Brenneman. Fortunately for all of us Kelly has chosen to keep her office here in the Desert so this will be the first time ever that a Deputy Director will be based out of the Desert! The new Children's and TAY Services Administrator to fill her spot here in the Desert is none other than the Windy Springs adult FSP Supervisor, Candice Hildebrand. Candice has been working as a therapist for 14 years and with the department since 2012. Her first day will be March 19.

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ADULT SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

Rachel Gileno reported that Blythe is serving 378 members. The Blythe Collaborative will be held Thursday, March 26th @ 12 pm. This quarter's collaborative will be hosted by Peace from Chaos in their new location. Indio is serving 1328 Non-FSP members and 186 FSP members. They are currently recruiting for 1 LVN, 1 BHS II; preparing to on-board 2 new PSS in March.

Windy Springs is serving 171 members and in the process of recruiting: 1 PSS, 1 CSA, 1 BHSS. The new ACT/FACT staffing has been approved and are now moving forward with building the desert region team. The plan is to begin providing services on or around July 1st. Banning is currently serving 813 Non-FSP members and 95 FSP members and recruiting for 1 BHS III.

Older Adults Administrator's Comments:

Nate Ramirez reported that they are continuing to work on timely access for members but they lost a primary psychiatrist from their program and are using Riverside Telemedicine as a replacement. Next month they will have an Older Adults System of Care in DHS.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Children's Committee Report:

Tori St Johns reported on the Children's Committee Activities, details not available for these minutes.

Adults Committee Report:

Jim Jones reported on the Adults Committee Activities, details not available for these minutes.

Mature Adults Committee Report:

No Report as Maura Fisher was absent.

Housing Committee Report:

Eva Guenther-James reported on the Housing Committee Activities, details not available for these minutes.

Legislative Report:

No Report as Mark Miller was absent.

Membership Report:

Dr. Janice Quinn said that after the paperwork is completed for Amber to officially be made a member there are two positions open on the Board, both for family positions. George Thomstad has indicated he would be interested in completing Christine's term. Charles Richardson has indicated he would be interested in joining the board if one of the family positions could be taken by a consumer.

Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) Report:

Tori St Johns said they had several excellent presentations that we might want to have for the Desert Board. She will give Dr. Quinn the information to see if they can be booked.

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Criminal Justice Committee Report:

No Report was available as Carole Schaudt was absent.

Veteran's Committee Report:

Joe Butts said the most recent Veterans meeting was cancelled so he had nothing new to report.

MOTION TO ADJOURN was made and seconded.

The next meeting of the Riverside County Desert Behavioral Health Board will be off-site at the Taj Mahal Indio Fairgrounds on Tuesday, May 12, 2026 and merged with the May is Mental Health John J Benoit Behavioral Health Arts Festival beginning at 12:00 PM. The Art Festival begins at 11am and runs until 2pm. The address is 82-503 Highway 111, Indio California 92201, enter off Arabia Street. Free Parking is available.

Respectfully submitted by:

Janice Quinn MD, Desert Board Vice Chair for Mark Miller, Secretary