

RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM-BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Behavioral Health Commission – Legislative Committee

Wednesday, June 3rd, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	PRESENT
- April Smith– Chair, Behavioral Health Commissioner -- Walter Haessler – Commissioner, Mid-County Board Member - Beatriz Gonzales, BHC Commissioner - Brenda Scott – Commissioner, Mid-County Advisory Board; NAMI Mt. San Jacinto / NAMI California/ Co-Chair - Melissa Vasquez – Senior Family Advocate, RUHS-BH, Mid-County	- Rhyann Miller- Integrated Programs Deputy Director - April Frey/(Substance Use Prevention & Treatment, Collaborative Courts, Juvenile Halls, Field-Based Teams)	- Diana Gutierrez/BHSA Administrator - Sandy Awad – RUHS-BH Administration Support - Sheila Mallett-Smith- BHC Commissioner -- Tony Ortego-Older Adult Administrator - Elise Rico

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION/FOLLOW-UP
CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS	Chair April Smith called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Committee members and guests introduced themselves and shared their roles and interests in participating in the Legislative Committee.	
ANNOUNCEMENTS	• Dr. Walter Haessler inquired about the replacement of former Government Relations representative Tim Kirkconnell and the continuation of legislative updates previously provided through that position. • Diana Gutierrez reported: Recruitment efforts for the position are underway. She has been appointed to participate in the California Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) Legislative Committee. Her first meeting with the committee will take place on June 12, 2026. Future legislative updates related to behavioral health legislation will be shared through this participation.	
MEETING MINUTES	The committee reviewed the previous meeting minutes. No corrections or clarifications were requested. The minutes were accepted as presented.	
OLD BUSINESS	A) NAMI Updates	

	AB 1016 • Related to CARE Court. • Would authorize petitioners to request a mental health evaluation when an individual may be unable or unwilling to participate in the CARE process. SB 989 • Related to the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program. • Expands the ability of certain individuals, including family members and first responders, to petition the court regarding voluntary care plans. AB 96 • Peer Support Specialist Certification. • Removes the requirement that applicants possess a high school diploma or equivalent in order to qualify for certification. Committee members discussed the proposal to remove the educational requirement for Peer Support Specialists. Discussion points included: The significant role peer support specialists play within behavioral health services. The value of lived experience. Concerns that educational requirements may create unnecessary barriers for otherwise qualified candidates. Recognition of peer support as a critical and growing component of behavioral health services. AB 1540 • Related to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and LGBTQ+ youth services. • Addresses technology and transfer capabilities between 988 call centers. AB 1579	
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	- Children's Community Crisis Continuum Pilot Program. Brenda Scott agreed to distribute additional legislative information and links to committee members. BHSA Update Diana Gutierrez reported positive progress regarding the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA): Integrated Plan Approval - The BHSA Integrated Plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 2, 2026. - Riverside County remains on track to submit the plan by the June 30, 2026 deadline. - This is expected to be the first on-time submission in the history of the county's MHSA/BHSA planning process. Committee members congratulated staff on this achievement.	
NEW BUSINESS	State Budget and Mobile Crisis Services Brenda Scott reported concerns regarding a proposal in the Governor's budget to eliminate the statewide Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit. Discussion included: - Potential impacts on Riverside County behavioral health services. - Importance of Mobile Crisis Teams in supporting individuals and families in crisis. - Concerns regarding the loss of funding for crisis response services. - Encouragement for advocacy efforts, including letters to legislators and the Governor. Diana Gutierrez indicated she had not yet received updates regarding the proposal. Action Item: - Explore inviting a representative from the Mobile Crisis Team to a future Legislative Committee meeting to discuss potential impacts and service outcomes. Federal Medicaid Discussion Brenda Scott shared information regarding proposed federal Medicaid work requirements. Discussion points included: - Potential requirement for beneficiaries to complete work, volunteer, or community engagement activities.	

	- Concerns regarding individuals with serious mental illness who may face challenges obtaining medical exemptions. - Recognition that older adults age 55 and above would be exempt from the proposed requirement. Committee members expressed concern about the potential impact on vulnerable populations.	
COMMITTEE UPDATES	No additional committee updates were reported.	
NEXT MEETING	Meeting Date Time September 2, 2026 11:00 a.m. October 7, 2026 10:30 a.m. January 6, 2027 11:00 a.m. February 3, 2027 10:30 a.m. March 3, 2027 10:30 a.m. May 5, 2027 10:30 a.m. June 2, 2027 10:30 a.m.	
PUBLIC COMMENTS	No public comments	
ADJOURNMENT	The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM	

FY 25/26 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE ROSTER

Present = **P** · Absent = **A** · Medical Leave = **ML**

Members	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
1. April Smith	A		P		P		P		P	P		p
2. Beatriz Gonzalez	A		P		P		A		A	P		p
3. Brenda Scott	P		P		P		P		P	P		p
4. Dr. Walter Haessler	ML		P		P		P		P	P		p
5. Melissa Vasquez	P		P		P		P		P	P		p