

## **RIVERSIDE COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION**

MEETING MINUTES FOR December 3, 2025 • 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

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

Madam Vice Chair Victoria St. Johns 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 –**

April Smith made a motion to approve minutes as written from November 5, 2025 and Rick Gentillalli seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS –** Madam Vice Chair Victoria St. Johns announced the BOS letter from District 2 cannot be put into the minutes since it was not an agenda item. She then shared she was elected as the Desert regional advisory board chair in the inner rim in Richard Divine's place.

**COMMISSION MEMBER REMARKS –** None

**PUBLIC REMARKS –** None

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Dr. Matthew Chang**

Dr. Chang began by apologizing to the commission regarding the letter they received from district 2 and that it was unknown to him and he would have preferred any concerns of the commission follow chain of command within the department. He expressed his gratitude to the commission for their dedication and advocacy of the population we serve. He then gave a brief update sharing the current projects are moving along with the build out of facilities and other counties are implementing our department's approach which reflects the work we are doing. He concluded by sharing there will be challenges on the horizon but reassured we have a great team and collectively will be responsive to any challenges that come up and move forward.

### **CELEBRATE RECOVERY- Parent Support (Maria Arnold)**

Maria Arnold, Parent Partner Program Manager, introduced Fatima Mandene. Ms. Mandene shared that she grew up in foster care from age two until seventeen years of age. She expressed she felt the foster system is broken and failed her and asked that the department take a closer look into the system and make changes so not to fail other children. She shared she is a mother of two, a student at RCC striving to become an ASL interpreter and later wants to transfer to a university to obtain a bachelor's degree in nursing. Ms. Mandene shared she has no criminal background or substance use history but has learned that genetics and the upbringing of her environment play a role in her mental health. She shared about a year ago she was feeling depressed and defeated which was taking a toll on her mentally, so she did some research on the internet and found resources and learned how to cope with her symptoms. She then decided to attend triple P classes to better herself as a mother for her children and then met Vanessa who never pressured her and made her feel welcome and encouraged her, which gave her a sense of belonging. She decided to receive mental health services and was diagnosed with PTSD, ADHD and anxiety, which sometimes prevented her from meeting the goals she wanted to accomplish but Vanessa helped to keep her anchored. Ms. Mandene concluded by sharing she is grateful to the department because she now has a safe place to go to and a sense of belonging where

she is always warmly welcomed. She has been able to manage her mental health symptoms and be the mother to her children she wants to be and is able to advocate for others through her experiences.

#### NEW BUSINESS-

1. **Public Guardian Overview (Marcus Cannon)**

Marcus Cannon provided an overview on the Public Guardian, please see power point link below.

[https://www.ruhealth.org/sites/default/files/Behavioral\\_Health/BH%20Commission/overview-of-public-guardian-behavioral-health-commission-120225-1.pptx](https://www.ruhealth.org/sites/default/files/Behavioral_Health/BH%20Commission/overview-of-public-guardian-behavioral-health-commission-120225-1.pptx)

2. **Ad Hoc Committee Formation (Annual Report Form Revision & Bylaws)**

Quintilia Ávila, Beatriz Gonzalez, April Smith, Victoria St. Johns and Ms. Deborah Johnson volunteered to serve on the Annual Report Form Revision ad hoc committee.

Greg Damewood, Walter Haessler, Sheila Mallet-Smith and Launa Wilson volunteered to serve on the Bylaw Ad Hoc committee, Victoria St. Johns also shared Dr. Quinn, vice chair with the Desert RAB expressed an interest to serve on this ad hoc committee.

The BHC liaison will follow up to coordinate and schedule the participants first ad hoc committee meetings.

#### OLD BUSINESS-

1. **Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Update -** (Diana Gutierrez on behalf of David Schoelen)

Diana Gutierrez, PEI Administrative Services Manager, provided a brief update on the transition of the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). Mrs. Gutierrez shared there have been 51 stakeholder presentations throughout the county and connected with the regulatory required groups listed in the BHSA plan and established partnership in the community health assessment and community health improvement process with the health department. She also mentioned that participation requirements have been met as she has joined their steering committee to plan the next community health assessment plans and gathering information to work on improving current goals and strategies. She continued by sharing the goal is to have the BHSA draft plan ready for public review and comment by mid-January and that will be posted on the department website along with the public hearing recordings that will be provided in English, Spanish and ASL. Mrs. Gutierrez concluded by sharing the public hearing dates are as follows: February 18, 2026 at the Moreno Valley Conference center, February 26, 2026 at the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission and March 12, 2026 at the Elks Lodge in Hemet and flyer will be distributed once it has been finalized.

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

Heidi Gomez, SAPT Administrator, announced the Integrated and Forensic Programs Provider meeting will take place on December 18, 2025 at 12pm at MV conference center. She also mentioned there will be few RFP's (requests for proposals) released in December, for a short-term residential treatment program, a crisis residential treatment program and a substance use disorder residential and sobering center. She then shared a slide of photos and short video from Recovery Happens, briefly shared highlights from the events that day and also announced Mrs. Johnson received a Certificate of Achievement from District 2 Supervisor Karen Spiegel's office.

Ms. Gomez then concluded by stating she would send the RODA reports to the BHC liaison to be distributed.

**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/sites/default/files/Behavioral Health/BH%20Commission/bhc-care-act-update-12.3.25-1.pptx](https://www.ruhealth.org/sites/default/files/Behavioral%20Health/BH%20Commission/bhc-care-act-update-12.3.25-1.pptx)

**COMMITTEE UPDATE –**

Victoria St. Johns announced the Children’s committee would be meeting December 9, 2025 at the Myers building beginning at 12pm.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS-**

Greg Damewood requested overview of RUHS Foundation.

Quintilia Ávila requested site review visits and restructure of standing committees.

Employee appreciation winners suggested by Cheryl Coson.

QIC update suggested previously by Launa Wilson.

**ADJOURN** – The Behavioral Health Commission meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

*Sylvia Bishop*

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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](mailto: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						
Beatriz Gonzalez, District 4	P	P	P	P						
Brenda Scott, District 3	P	P	P	A						
Carole Schaudt, District 4	P	P	A	A						
Daryl Terrell, District 5	P	P	P	P						

Elysse Rico, BOS Rep. Dist. 2	P	P	P	P						
Greg Damewood, District 5	P	P	P	P						
Harshita Arunkumar, Dist. 1	P	A	A	A						
Launa Wilson, District 1	A	P	P	P						
Quintilia Ávila, District 2	P	P	P	P						
Rick Gentillalli, District 5	P	P	P	P						
Sheila Mallet-Smith, Dist. 3	P	A	P	P						
Victoria St. Johns, District 4	P	P	P	P						
Dr. Walter Haessler, Dist. 3	P	P	P	P						

Present = P • Absent = A

PRESENT			
Deborah Johnson	Jane Beamer	Alma Viteri	
Dr. Chang	Chanteil Guy	Lupe Madrigal	
Sylvia Bishop	Rita Massie	Rubit Romero	
Lucy Lopez	Patricia Johnson	Melissa Noone	
Israel Torres	Deborah Young	Leah Newell	
Rhyan Miller	Denise Morgan	Orli Zapir	
Maria Arnold	Jennel Rand	Adrienne Gee	
Marcus Cannon	Willard Wynn	Kami Winston	
Diana Gutierrez	Carina Gustafsson	Lauren Adamson	
David Schoelen	Tyrone Peterson	Melissa Dalke	
Heidi Gomez	Fatima Mandene	Steven Willis	
Kristen Duffy	Dakota Brown	Elizabeth Del Rio	
Tony Ortego	April Frey	Mary Carpio	
Dr. Benetiz	Aaron Perez	Gustavo Valdez	
Bill Brenneman	Ashely Housley	Miriam Resendiz	
Amy McCann	Mary Apprill	George Gaeta	
Shannon McCleerey-Hooper	Novanh Xayarath	Francisco Huerta	
Jacqueline Markussen	Beverly McKeddie		
Christofer Nicodemus	Dolores DeMartino		