



Matthew Chang MD, DIRECTOR

RIVERSIDE COUNTY DESERT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
47-825 Oasis St.
Indio, CA 92201

MINUTES
01/14/2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Richard Divine; Chairperson, Dr. Janice Quinn; Vice-Chairperson, Mark Miller, Tori St Johns, Jim Jones, Bruce Sherr, Huynh Cue Nguyen, Eva Guenther-James, Joe Butts, Sandy Neja, Christine Thomstad.

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Carole Schaudt, Maura Fisher.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Beatriz Gonzalez.

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT: Rachel Gileno; Adult Services Administrator, Alisa Huntington; Supervisor of TAY & Multi-Disciplinary Family Therapy (MDFT), RUHS Mary Carpio; Secretary to Rachel Gileno, Kathy Myers; Senior Peer Support Specialist – RUHS – BH, Denise Morgan; Secretary to Kelly Grotzky, Robert Lara; Senior Peer Support Specialist, TAY Drop-in Center, Shawn Harris; Senior Parent Partner; Parent Support & Training Program – Desert Region, Gabe Kason; Indio SAPT Clinic Supervisor, Misty Martin; Senior Family Advocate, RUHS – BH Blythe, Ashley Jean; Senior Peer Support Specialist at the Peer Support and Resource Center in Indio, Dakota Brown; CCP Cultural Community Liaison to People with Disabilities.

OTHERS PRESENT: Kelly Lewallen; Clinical Director, Desert Marriage and Family Counseling, Robert Lewallen; Desert Marriage and Family Counseling.

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND SELF INTRODUCTIONS:

Richard Divine called the meeting of the Riverside County Desert Behavioral Health Advisory Board to order at 12:02 PM. Self-introductions of all who were in attendance in person or by teleconference followed.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Bruce Sherr said he was homeless at one time and now he has been in his apartment for seven years.

Rachel announced that Kathy Myers will be retiring next month, and this meeting will be her last meeting, and she will be greatly missed by all.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Limit 3 minutes per speaker):

None.

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ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Richard Divine asked if there were any additions, corrections, or deletions to the board minutes of the November 12, 2024 meeting. There were no additions, corrections or deletions that needed to be made. Bruce Sherr made a motion to accept the corrected minutes and Huynh Cue Nguyen seconded the motion and it passed 10-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adopted Family Gift Giveaway and Snowflakes Recap:

Shawn Harris gave an update on this matter and said the family was extremely grateful for the gifts and monies that were donated by the board members and others. She added they had 497 Snowflake requests, and they were able to fill all 497 requests.

Interactive Review of Desert Board Goals/Status/Representation:

Dr. Janice Quinn gave a recap of past Desert Board's projects including police training, working with desert employers to hire our clients, the mental health lapel pin, the anti-stigma push, school programs, and the art show. She asked for suggestions for new projects or tasks that the board may want to tackle this year. Tori St Johns suggested we try to do something to ease the burdens on immigrants' legal rights and procedures given the current change in immigration practices by the Trump administration.

2025 Review of Committee Memberships/Representatives:

Dr. Janice Quinn asked if we needed to add another committee that might need to be added to our Board's agenda or changes to the Board assignments on the existing committees. There were no suggestions for new committees to be added and Eva Guenther-James said she would be willing to take over the Criminal Justice Committee from Carole Schaudt.

Other New Business:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

Coachella Valley Behavioral Health Hospital Update:

Dr. Janice Quinn asked if the facility was able to accept involuntary commitments as they were only able to accept voluntary commitments when they first opened. There was no current information on this yet and it is unknown if they had their State of California inspection yet to authorize them to accept them.

Board Roster – Updated:

Dr. Janice Quinn passed out the current Board roster and asked if there needed to be any corrections or deletions and if so to get together with her after the meeting.

20th Annual May is Mental Health Month Art Show/2025 John Benoit Behavioral Health Art Festival Update:

Dr. Janice Quinn said the Art Show meeting prior to the meeting had a lot of people who attended it. She said a lot of suggestions were put forth that would help this year's show go smoother. She said this year's show is scheduled to take place on Tuesday May, 13, 2025 at the Taj Mahal building at the fairgrounds.

Other Old Business:

None.

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MONTHLY UPDATE AND REPORT:

Substance Abuse Program Update:

Gabe Kason said the Harm Reduction Program is still ongoing and a lot of supervisors will be going to conferences next month. He said they are giving out gift certificates to participants every time they test negative for a stimulant. There are two clinics participating in the program and more will be coming onboard this year. He said they are starting to clear out the Monroe building on the substance abuse side so they can move into their new location. They are also now collaborating with detention facilities in Riverside County every Wednesday morning to offer services to inmates confined there. He concluded by saying they will have a drug court graduation on January 23, 2025 and they are averaging 1-2 weeks to get clients into residential treatment.

Peer Support and Resource Center:

Ashley reported that they will be celebrating the Chinese New Year in January. For more information on this and other events taking place, refer to the attached calendar of events.

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Program Update:

Rob Lara reported they had a holiday event in December that went very well.

CHILDRENS SERVICES MANAGER COMMENTS:

Rachel Gileno covered this under her Adult Administrator's comments.

ADULT SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS COMMENTS:

Rachel reported they are partnering with the Riverside Sheriff's Corrections Department to work with inmates being released to ease their transition back into the communities they live in. She added the Banning Children's Clinic is now fully staffed. She said they recently started training staff in Family Therapy Training. She said they are continuing to send staff to Harmony Haven in Banning to assist the youth there with behavioral health issues. She also reported that the TAY Desert Flow Center recently got their local in-person psychiatrist back.

Rachel said there will be a rapid improvement event in Blythe on January 21 and 23. The topic will be community partnerships. There will also be a Blythe Collaborative meeting on January 30, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Rachel said they are still struggling to recruit for open positions at the Blythe clinic, but they were successful in hiring a full-time clinical therapist for Blythe. She said they started a new Mom's Program in Blythe also as well as an ongoing expansion program at the clinic. She added that Carina Alcala is the new supervisor for Indio Adult Outpatient and has been with the department for about ten years. She also shared the position openings for the Banning and Indio clinics and Windy Springs.

Older Adults Administrator's Comments:

Tabled until the February, 11 2025 meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Children's Committee Report:

Tori St Johns said they had a roundtable discussion among all the members, including Friday Night Live.

Adults Committee Report:

Jin Jones said they had no new report to give.

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Older Adults Committee Report:

Tabled until February 11, 2025 meeting.

Housing Committee Report:

Sandy Neja reported that Cathedral Palms is 97% occupied.

Legislative Report:

No report to give.

Membership Report:

Richard Divine said we currently have 14 members with one open position.

Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) Report:

Richard Divine reported they had a budget update by Amy McCann. He added they had an employee winner and appreciation announcement and presentation, and the annual board training will be on August 10, 2025 at the Rustin building.

Criminal Justice Committee Report:

Tabled until February 11, 2025 meeting.

Veteran's Committee Report:

Tabled until February 11, 2025 meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.

The next formal meeting of the Riverside County Desert Board of Behavioral Health will be **Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at the Oasis Adult Conference Room at 12:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted by: _____

Mark Miller, Desert Board Secretary