



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DESERT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

**47-825 Oasis St.
Indio, CA 92201**

**MINUTES
04/08/25**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Janice Quinn, Vice Chairperson; Tori St Johns, Jim Jones, Carole Schaudt, Eva Guenther-James, Bruce Sherr, Maura Fisher, Christine Thomstad, Joseph Butts

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Richard Divine, Mark Miller, Huynh-Cuc Nguyen, Sandra Neja, Beatriz Gonzalez

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT: Rachel Gileno, Adult Services Administrator; Mary Carpio, Executive Assistant to Rachel Gileno; Denise Morgan, Executive Assistant to Kelly Grotsky, Children Services Administrator; Elizabeth Aguilar, Family Advocate, RUHS – BH; Gabe Kason, RUHS-BH SAPT Supervisor; Victor Ramirez, RUHS-BH Mature Adults Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT: Maria Cabrera, Guest from La Quinta; Sergio Cabrera, Guest from La Quinta; Amber Jordan, Guest from Palm Desert; Kathy Myers, RUHS-BH Retired Senior Peer

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND SELF INTRODUCTIONS:

Dr. Janice Quinn called the meeting of the Riverside County Desert Behavioral Health Advisory Board to order at 12:10 PM. Self-introductions of all who were in attendance in person or virtually followed.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Limit 3 minutes per speaker):

None.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Dr. Quinn asked if there were any additions, corrections, or deletions to the board minutes of the March 11, 2025 meeting. There were no additions, corrections or deletions that needed to be made. Tori St Johns made a motion to accept the minutes, Maura Fisher seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Family Advocate Program – Elizabeth Aguilar

Elizabeth Aguilar gave a PowerPoint slide presentation on the Family Advocate Program. She provided some background about the program, the staff, who they support, what they do, and list of groups offered; followed by a testimonial presentation by guest, Maria Cabrera. Maria shared her lived experience and struggles with a loved one and how Elizabeth and the Family Advocate Program helped her and her family every step of the way by providing support, connections to other RUHS programs and free resources that they didn't know were available.

Other New Business: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Desert Region May is Mental Health Awareness Event

Rachel Gileno informed that the event will be held on May 1st from 11:30AM – 4:30PM at the Palm Desert Civic Center Park. The programming and list of vendors is still in the works but shared that TAY will be hosting a talent show. Also, the MHSA hearing will be held on the same day and same location, inside the YMCA of the Desert building from 1:30 – 4:00PM. For those not able to attend, the hearing recording will be available on their website for the full month of May.

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

Dr. Janice Quinn confirmed event location will be the Taj Mahal building at the Indio fairgrounds on Tuesday May 13 and reserved from May 11-13 for set up and rental delivery. She asked for volunteers to help with set up and for help on event day. Food is being sponsored by NAMI of the Coachella Valley with Aspen Mills catering again this year. Judging will start at 7:30AM on Tuesday, certificates to be handed out near the welcome table. Dr. Quinn added that there is a lot of art being generated for the show, including large pieces and unique art pieces; she would like to see more children's art pieces submitted.

Other Old Business: None

MONTHLY UPDATE AND REPORT:

Substance Abuse Program Update:

Gabe Kason provided information on upcoming 1Life1Heart RUHS Poisoning & Overdose Awareness 5K Memorial Walk events scheduled on April 12 in Riverside, April 26 in Palm Desert and June 7 in Murrieta. He also talked about the success of their Recovery Incentive Program for members with a stimulant diagnosis. Participants that receive a negative test result for stimulants are given a gift card or the option to bank the earnings. This program is in partnership with UCLA and is being offered at both their Indio and Desert Hot Springs locations. Plus, they now have a five-year contract with Desert Sands Unified School District which will run through summer school. He added that their recovery groups are doing great, offered in both English and Spanish. They have a new Spanish speaking counselor and a new clinical therapist starting on April 17. Every Wednesday they collaborate with the jail on warm hand-offs of inmates that need substance abuse services or medication assisted treatment after released. Gabe added that It's taking them a week to get people into treatment for both detox and residential placement, but there are quite a few sober living in the desert available, contact Gabe Kason for more information.

Peer Support and Resource Center:

Ashley Jean – absent, no report; PSRC April calendar of group activities handed out.

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Program Update:

Rachel Gileno briefly went over some of the TAY groups scheduled on their April calendar of group activities.

CHILDRENS SERVICES MANAGER COMMENTS:

Rachel Gileno on behalf of Kelly Grotsky – Kelly continues to work on building a team at Harmony Haven, a youth emergency shelter located in Beaumont, Banning Clinic staff will be providing support.

ADULT SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS COMMENTS:

Rachel Gileno – for the Blythe Community there will be a conference held on Tuesday, April 22 at Palo Verde College from 9:00AM – 12:00PM. Rachel and Kelly will be attending in support of the Blythe Clinic staff who will have a table at the conference to help outreach the community there. On Monday, April 21 Kristen Duffy, Peer Support Services Administrator, along with Rachel and Tony Ortego, Mature Adults Administrator, will be holding interviews for Senior Peer of the Desert.

MATURE ADULTS ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

Victor Nate Ramirez, Supervisor for Desert Mature Adults Program – reports that plans to expand Mature Adult services in Indio are underway with the addition of another Clinical Therapist and another Behavioral Health Specialist. They just added another Clinical Therapist to their team at the Banning Clinic and hope to do the same with their Desert Hot Springs team. A Peer Support Specialist has been brought on to their Wellness side of the program. They hope to expand their Peer Support Services throughout the Desert Region, currently they don't have Peer Support Specialists in the Desert area, they've been receiving assistance from Desert Family Advocate, Liz Aguilar, who has been a huge help. They hired their own Family Advocate recently, Matthew Hinojosa, who was just certified. Lastly, Nate added that they continue to work collaboratively with HHOPE, both programs working closely supporting member's living in units at Cathedral Palms, Legacy and Verbena apartments located in and around the Palm Springs area.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Behavioral Health Commission Report:

Tori St. Johns on behalf of Richard Divine – shared that Marcus Cannon, Forensics Deputy Director, provided a presentation on Care Court to the main board, Tori then shared the Care Court flyer and statistics with everyone.

Children's Committee Report:

Tori St. Johns shared that Janine Moore, Children's Services Deputy Director, did a presentation for the main board on Children's Services that are offered countywide. She then shared the PowerPoint presentation handout with everyone.

Adults Committee Report:

Tabled until May 13, 2025 meeting.

Older Adults Committee Report:

Maura Fisher provided names of presentations and presenters given at the last five meetings - Presentation by Christina Dominguez and Traci Cornelius with Office on Aging in February, Presentation by Teresa Campbell with Social Security Administration in January, Presentation by Arlene Bruins with Inland Empire Alzheimer's Association in November, and Presentation by Marcus Cannon, Forensics Deputy Director on Public Guardian in October.

Housing Committee Report:

Tabled until May 13, 2025 meeting.

Legislative Report:

Tabled until May 13, 2025 meeting.

Membership Report:

Tabled until May 13, 2025 meeting.

Criminal Justice Committee Report:

Eva Guenther-James clarified that the Justice Committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month; there is no meeting in April.

Veteran's Committee Report:

Tabled until May 13, 2025 meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Jim Jones made motion to adjourn the meeting and Bruce Sherr seconded the motion; Dr. Janice Quinn adjourned the meeting at 1:34PM.

The next formal meeting of the Riverside County Desert Board of Behavioral Health will be at the **John J. Benoit Art Festival on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at the Riverside County Indio Fairgrounds, Taj Mahal Building located at 82-503 Highway 111, Gate 4, Indio at 12:00PM.**

Respectfully submitted by: _____

Mary Carpio, Executive Assistant to
Rachel Gileno, Desert Region Behavioral Health Administrator