



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS) BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD (BHB) January 22, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 5:30 p.m. and was called to order by Kathy Rupe, Chair. Peter Dean led the board members and the audience in the pledge of allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Kym Barber, Peter Dean, Olivia Esquiviz Gonzalez, Jack Griffith, Annie Henrich, Margie Johnson, Loren Mannard, Kathy Rupe, Jack Waldorf, Keryn Whitlow

STAFF PRESENT

Cynthia Bocage, Keri Magee, Ruben Imperial, Leonor Sierra, Melissa Farris, Olivia Jimenez

GUESTS PRESENT

Brian MacLaren, Codie Hernandez, Jessica Parman, Kelly Coelho, Karla Hendrix, Elias Van Ekelenburg, Elva Ochoa

CORRESPONDENCE

None reported.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: Olivia Esquiviz Gonzalez made a motion to approve the Behavioral Health Board minutes of November 20, 2025, and Keryn Whitlow seconded the motion.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (BOS) REPORT

None reported.

PUBLIC COMMENTS CONSUMER, GENERAL, FAMILY

None reported.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Kathy Rupe reported that the committee finalized the agenda for the January 22, 2026, board meeting. Cynthia provided a proposed list of presentations for the 2026 board meetings. The committee reviewed the updated list of internal and contracted programs. The Executive committee will review the list and return with its recommendations at the next committee meeting. Each site visit will be limited to the participation of two board members.

Administrative Fiscal Management Committee

Jack Waldorf reported that the fiscal outlook is more favorable than originally anticipated. Staff were requested to provide a list of all building addresses and identify which programs are located at each site. Additionally, BHSA will move its February meeting to March. BHSA will present the updated

Plan to the board in March.

PRESENTATION: Safety Center Inc., DUI Program Expansion-Turlock

Ellias Van Ekelenburg, President & CEO of Safety Center; Elva Ochoa, Program Administrator; and Karla Hendrix, Vice President of the Alcohol and Drug Program, provided a PowerPoint presentation to the board members proposing a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) program at 809 Hawkeye Avenue in Turlock. The proposed DUI program would expand access to services for First Offender programs of 3, 6, and 9 months, as well as 18-month Multiple Offender programs, including services of up to 30 months. A copy of the Power Point presentation was distributed to all board members.

APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED DUI PROGRAM EXPANSION IN TURLOCK

Ruben Imperial, BHRS Director, stated that, pursuant to Title 9 of the Health and Safety Code, Chapter 9, counties are required to complete the DUI program licensing and approval process before an application may be forwarded to the State. As part of this process, the County must confirm two elements: (1) that a need exists for an additional DUI program, and (2) that approval of the expansion will not jeopardize the fiscal integrity of an existing licensed DUI program. These are the two considerations that the Behavioral Health Board (BHB), as well as the Board of Supervisors (BOS), will evaluate when considering approval of the DUI program. The City of Turlock supports the expansion of Safety Center DUI services in Turlock.

Action: Kathy Rupe called for a vote to approve the proposed Safety Center DUI Program Expansion at 809 Hawkeye Avenue in Turlock. The motion was carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Ruben Imperial, BHRS Director, reported the following highlights:

- Assembly Bill 416: Expands physician authority for 5150 holds. A presentation will be provided at the next board meeting. Letters were sent to all hospitals and emergency rooms informing them of the changes in law. Hospitals with physicians implementing this authority are required to notify the department, and ensure their staff are trained and certified.
- Ruben as well as Supervisor Chiesa visited the Hope Forward project in Turlock, developed in partnership with Aspiranet and in collaboration with Stanislaus, Merced, and San Joaquin counties. The Hope Forward Campus will provide a psychiatric health facility, crisis stabilization unit, wellness center, family visitation center, and Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) for children and youth. The program is being funded from a \$30 million grant from the State and an additional local organizing grant.
- Changes in Medi-Cal rates for Mobile Crisis Response, effective January rates increased to 85%. Under the Governor's proposed budget, these services are no longer mandatory, and rates will decrease to 50% effective April 2027.
- BHRS will convene monthly meetings with Stanislaus County law enforcement agencies to provide a forum for discussing community concerns related to behavioral health, substance use and overdoses, the opioid crisis, and homelessness. Participants will include a Mental Health Crisis Manager and members of the Early Crisis Prevention Outreach Team, with meetings co-facilitated by the Access Manager. The first meeting is scheduled for February.

- The Sheriff's Office is developing training for BHRS and law enforcement agencies. The training will highlight response procedures and responsibilities across various jurisdictions, with the goal of building more consistency.
- BHRS is currently working with 911 dispatch centers to improve integration and communication within their systems, including coordination with the City of Ceres, which has been receptive.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Kym Barber, announced NAMI Stanislaus will host a youth-focused Behavioral Health Community Town Hall on February 24, 2026, featuring Supervisor Chance Condit, facilitated by Orestimba High School NAMI, including a youth advocacy award ceremony. Additionally, NAMI Stanislaus, in collaboration with Del Puerto Health Care District, Patterson School District, and Patterson Parks and Recreation, will host NAMIWalks Central Valley on April 25, 2026, at Patterson High School to raise mental health awareness and support NAMI programs.

Annie Henrich, a member of the Stanislaus Asian American Community Resource (SAACR), shared that SAACR will be sponsoring an annual Youth Leadership Conference March 5, 2026, in partnership with the Modesto City School District. The conference is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Peterson Event Center.

Olivia Esquivel Gonzalez invited members to a Valentine's Family Dance held at the Westside Theater in Newman on February 14, 2026, starting at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The next meeting will be February 26, 2026, 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., at 1130 12th St. Modesto.

Respectfully Submitted by O. Jimenez, Confidential Assistant III