



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD

1601 I Street, Ste. 200, Second Floor
Modesto, CA 95354
Phone: 209.525-6225 Fax: 209.558-4326

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS) BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD (BHB) August 28, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 5:00 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, Christopher Costin, Peter Dean, Olivia Esquivex Gonzalez, Annie Henrich, Margie Johnson, Loren Mannard, Kathy Rupe, Jack Waldorf, Keryn Whitlow

STAFF PRESENT

Cynthia Bocage, Keri Magee, Ruben Imperial, Jennifer Marsh, David Diaz, Paula McDowell, Juanita Espinoza, Olivia Jimenez

GUESTS PRESENT

Brian MacLaren, Daniel Wendall

CORRESPONDENCE

Cynthia Bocage reported that on August 19, 2025, the Board of Supervisors accepted Larry Bolton's resignation from the Behavioral Health Board, creating a vacancy in District 4.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: Keryn Whitlow made a motion to approve the Behavioral Health Board minutes of July 24, 2025, and Olivia Esquivex Gonzalez 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 August 28, 2025, board meeting. The Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) stakeholder meetings will be held in various regions, including evenings. Cynthia Bocage will track and share meeting locations. Kym Barber reported that the Ad Hoc Committee will present its final recommendations on the committee restructure for board approval in September. Ruben provided an update on the CARE Act amendment, which may expand program criteria to include mood disorders and psychosis.

Administrative Fiscal Management Committee

None reported.

Inpatient Committee

Jack Waldorf reported that the committee received a presentation from Christin Montoya, Regional Director of Operations for Stanislaus Psychiatric Health Facility. Christin presented information regarding the services provided at the facility.

Mental Health Committee

None reported.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Committee

Margie Johnson reported that Charles Yarnell, BHRS SUD Manager, provided a presentation on the Substance Use Disorder System of Care (SOC), covering all programs within the SOC.

PRESENTATION: Relationship Engagement and Community Health (REACH) Program

Paula McDowell, SUD Clinical Manager, and David Diaz, Mental Health Coordinator, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the REACH (Relationships, Engagement, and Community Health) Program — a key initiative of Stanislaus County Behavioral Health. REACH engages individuals in diverse community settings to reduce barriers to accessing services, using outreach events and partnerships to promote engagement, education, and recovery. The program emphasizes community involvement and reducing stigma around Substance Use Disorders (SUD). A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was distributed to all board members.

DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Ruben Imperial, BHRS Director, reported the following highlights:

- BHRS is convening a monthly Behavioral Health Leadership Collaborative committee meeting, that will include Executives, Directors, and CEO-level from contract treatment programs. This meeting aims to ensure alignment with county and departmental priorities and promote a shared understanding of the department's vision.
- As part of the statewide CARE Court Work Group, which focuses on implementation, data, and evaluation, the CARE Court Initial Annual Update Report will be sent to board members and included on next month's agenda in case there are any questions.
- Ruben attended a meeting at the Sierra Vista Community Center in South Modesto, alongside Supervisor Chance Condit and other law enforcement officials. The discussion focused on Prop 1, BHSA, and the impacts of the Promotora Program. Community members were informed that future stakeholder group meetings will be held to provide additional information, gather their input, and discuss how these programs will be rolled out.
- Ruben will be meeting with the Law Enforcement Executive Committee (LEEC) to discuss BHSA and other issues. In addition, he will be meeting with family members and members we serve and various diverse cultural ethnic communities, as well as city mayors, to address behavioral health concerns, homelessness, and gather input on community needs and priorities.
- Ruben encouraged board members to join him at upcoming community events to ensure BHB representation. He emphasized the importance of having at least one board member present to show the community that BHB provides local oversight and accountability, beyond the Board of Supervisors. This helps the community know they have accessible representatives to address their concerns on behavioral health, mental health, and substance use disorder issues. Cynthia and Ruben will review the event calendar and send invites to board members.

- Proposition 36 was implemented in January 2025, enabling individuals charged with certain substance use-related offenses to be diverted to treatment programs in lieu of incarceration. However, some offenses previously classified as misdemeanors have since been reclassified as felonies. As of July 16, 2025, there have been 318 referrals under Proposition 36, with 49 individuals granted judicial diversion and 29 enrolled in treatment.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Olivia Esquivel-Gonzalez invited board members to attend the Newman Fall Festival, taking place August 29 to September 1, 2025, at Pioneer Park in Newman.

Jennifer Marsh reported that the Law Enforcement and Behavioral Health Summit will be held on September 2 and 3, 2025. Additionally, Stanislaus County 5k Run/Walk will take place on September 20, 2025, at MJC West Campus, located at 2201 Blue Gum Ave., Modesto.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m. The next meeting will be September 25, 2025, 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., at the Stanislaus Veterans Center, 3500 Coffee Rd. Ste.15, Modesto.

Respectfully Submitted by O. Jimenez, Confidential Assistant III