



County of San Diego

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TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

FROM: Luke Bergmann, Ph.D., Director, Behavioral Health Services

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR'S REPORT – August 2024

BHS DATA SCIENCE UPDATES

BHS' Data Science team provides oversight of key data governance components. BHS Data Science acts as a centralized data hub to support rapid-response, evidence-based decision making that informs program, clinical, and operational strategies.

BHS Data Science consists of four units:

1. Data Acquisition – Supports data integration by acquiring data from internal and external partners.
2. Data Integration – Combines data from multiple sources to extract additional value and leverage data as an enterprise asset.
3. Data Reporting & Analysis – Responsible for BHS reporting and analysis to support decision making.
4. Data Training & Engagement – Design, develop, and launch comprehensive series of data trainings with the goal of improving data fluency across BHS and promoting increased data usage by addressing challenges, building trust in data, and teaching data skills.

Below are updates regarding key bodies of work that BHS Data Science has been engaged in.

Data Governance Updates

BHS Data Science has been leading data governance efforts within the department, including the following:

- Forming an actionable departmental data strategy, triangulating population health and service data, to assess needs and inform programming and services through system-level planning and development. The strategy is designed to support effective and equitable optimization of the behavioral health and wellness continuum, and network navigation.
- Developing Data Governance Framework for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 to ensure organizational data management, coordination, and alignment. This framework will support transformation of the behavioral health system from a system driven by crisis to one rooted in chronic and continuous care and prevention.

SmartCare

As announced last fiscal year, County of San Diego has halted implementation of Cerner Millennium as the replacement for Cerner Community Behavioral Health (CCBH) and pivoted to the implementation of SmartCare, with go-live planned for FY 24-25. The Data Science team has continued to provide support to this effort, including supporting data migration efforts and validation testing, in collaboration with teams across BHS and the broader Health and Human Services Agency and County enterprise that are supporting implementation.

Board

Board is the BHS Financial Management System that tracks and manages contract data related to finance and budget and conducts various reporting capabilities. The BHS Data Science team seamlessly threads with BHS Program & Services and other BHS units to ensure uninterrupted access to Board. Further utilization of Board capacity has allowed for the viewing and approval of invoices, saving time, resources, and increasing accuracy. These efforts support the County's Transparency and Accountability strategic initiative by maintaining program and fiscal integrity through reports, disclosures, and audits. Additionally, efforts support the County's Innovation strategic initiative by implementing proven best practices to achieve organizational excellence.

Law Enforcement Collaboration

Efforts continue to further enhance partnerships between BHS and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) around integrating Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data from Public Safety Access Points (PSAPs). Data Science began collecting CAD data for both emergency and non-emergency calls on a quarterly basis. Currently, this effort is in Phase 4 Data Integration, with the four phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Establish relationships with all Law Enforcement jurisdictions.
- Phase 2: Receive and analyze sample data.
- Phase 3: Establish infrastructure for regular data transmission.
- Phase 4: Integrate data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Continuous efforts are being made to streamline and enhance data collection and analysis for various programs including Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT), Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT), and Public Conservator (PC) to allow for improved care coordination. BHS Data Science is also providing support for clinical design efforts for BHS programs, including Long Term Care (LTC), Augmented Served Program (ASP), Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Residential, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), and Crisis Residential. The team is also providing data analysis to support planning for and implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 43, as well as ongoing data analysis support to the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act program.

BHS POPULATION HEALTH UNIT UPDATES

Fundamental to the BHS Population Health Unit is streamlining behavioral health data sources and analytics to provide a comprehensive view of the county's behavioral health needs, strengths, outcomes, and disparities. Robust behavioral health data allows for the development and implementation of innovative programs and policies based on identified trends and needs. This data is also used to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions, as well as to provide critical information back to the community. The BHS Population Health Unit, in concert with other BHS units, strives to use this data-driven approach to improve behavioral health services and increase health equity in San Diego County.

The following are updates regarding key bodies of work that the BHS Population Health Unit has been engaged in.

Network Quality & Planning (NQP)

Community Experience Partnership (CEP) Update

The Community Experience Dashboards are continuously updated with the latest data. These interactive Power BI dashboards are comprised of custom behavioral health datasets, including mapping overlays for spatial indicators. University of California San Diego (UCSD) has collaborated with BHS Population Health Epidemiologists to create a new dashboard based on inpatient and emergency department discharge data from California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI). The drafts are being finalized and are expected to launch in FY 2024-25. The dashboards can be found at the following link: <http://www.communityexperiencepartnership.com>.

The Behavioral Health Equity Index (BHEI) is a descriptive, data-driven tool that allows users to explore differences in the underlying root causes of behavioral health across neighborhoods and regions in San Diego County. The indices are constructed from over 30 indicators, organized into eight domains that map to five social determinants of behavioral health. Areas with higher BHEI scores are relatively less likely to have access to the resources, opportunities, and conditions that promote behavioral health than neighborhoods with lower BHEI scores. Areas with higher scores may benefit from behavioral health service enhancements or quality improvement efforts. The BHEI is programmed into a custom application developed in Shiny apps. Interactive maps allow users to explore BHEI rankings across census tracts, Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs), subregional area (SRA) levels, and Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) regions. Interactive maps generate neighborhood-specific summaries and weigh the BHEI by target populations of interest. The front-end was presented at various community meetings over the past fiscal year. At each meeting, the development team sought feedback on the design, usability, and cultural appropriateness of the tool. The revised tool is expected to be available on the Community Experience Dashboard website soon.

Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) Data Infrastructure Updates

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has implemented the CalAIM (also known as Medical Transformation) initiative to enhance accurate, quality data reporting, and process improvement. As a result, the County is required to report priority HEDIS metrics to facilitate continuous quality improvement, starting with measurement year 2023 (reporting year 2024). To comply with DHCS's HEDIS reporting requirements outlined in the Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) No. 24-004, BHS aimed to establish data infrastructure. To reach its goal, the NQP team organized four monthly HEDIS workgroup meetings that brought together members from the Data Science, Epidemiology, NQP, and UCSD teams. These meetings were instrumental in addressing issues related to claims data, HEDIS guidelines, technical assistance (TA) sessions, and the integration of CalMHSA's SmartCare EHR with HEDIS. With the help of ongoing collaborations between key HEDIS workgroup members, the CalMHSA Quality Measures Participation Agreement is currently being routed to continue these efforts.

Harm Reduction

On July 1, 2022, the County contracted with the Harm Reduction Coalition of San Diego (HRCSD) to expand the County's Naloxone Distribution Program (NDP) and to saturate the community with life-saving naloxone. Through the NDP, the County aims to reduce the impact of substance use by implementing overdose prevention with people who use drugs, service providers, and other community members. Efforts to saturate the community with naloxone include the implementation of 16 naloxone vending machines and, the expansion of the County's naloxone distribution provider network and targeted outreach activities. Each vending machine provides access to free-of-charge naloxone and/or fentanyl test strips (FTS) after completing a brief (about 2 minutes) state-required online training. Since the implementation of the first naloxone vending machine in March 2023, more than 5,000 naloxone kits and 20,000 fentanyl test strips have been dispensed. Vending machines are an innovative way to dispense naloxone and amplify efforts to increase accessibility to naloxone and prevent overdose. Featured in several local media pieces, this was highlighted as a unique and vital activity among the

County's various overdose prevention efforts. For more information on naloxone and/or vending machine locations please visit the BHS About Naloxone webpage at the following link: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/bhs/BHS_Harm_Reduction/About_Naloxone.html

Epidemiology

The Epidemiology team's main areas of work fall under community behavioral health and harm reduction. Within community behavioral health, the Epidemiology team supports clinical design and service planning, healthcare integration, and planning for whole-person support. A current project under this umbrella is the Youth Suicide Reporting and Crisis Response Pilot Program funded through the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), which aims to improve crisis response and report services to youth who attempt suicide. To support the pilot, the Epidemiology team develops surveillance processes to identify and monitor suicide-related emergency department encounters and analyze trends in suicide deaths. Within harm reduction, the team is part of the cross-departmental Overdose Surveillance and Response (OSAR) program, an effort between BHS and County Public Health Services (PHS), to conduct countywide overdose surveillance, provide timely response, and support community engagement. Additionally, the team provides ongoing data support and analysis for the CEP, Live Well Regional Community Leadership teams, Screening to Care Initiative, Substance Use and Overdose Prevention Taskforce, Suicide Prevention Council, Binge and Underage Drinking Initiative, and the Cannabis Public Health Initiative.

BHS SPECIAL EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ending of the Older Adult Outreach Specialist (OAOS) Position

Due to significant changes associated with Medi-Cal Transformation and the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), BHS has determined that effective July 1, 2024, the Older Adult Outreach Specialist (OAOS) position and the associated functions will end. OAOS positions have operated within 10 of the BHS Adult Outpatient Mental Health Clinic (referred to as BPSRs) contracts. Historically, OAOS positions supported the County's Aging and Independent Services hotline referrals by providing short-term support and linkage to appropriate services. BHS is working with Aging and Independent Services to support connections to alternative resources for this community need. The removal of this requirement from BPSR contracts is anticipated to have no impact on client access to treatment services, including for older adults. BHS will continue to provide treatment services to all age cohorts across our continuum of care. Individuals who are eligible for specialty mental health services can and should continue to be referred directly to BPSR programs as needed. The BPSRs will also continue to utilize their Older Adult Lead Clinicians to coordinate and provide specialized services for older adults, and to utilize existing mobile positions, including Peer Support Specialists and mobile outreach clinicians, to assist with outreach and linkage.

National Recovery Month – Community Update

This year, BHS embarks on an exciting new direction for National Recovery Month, utilizing our online platforms to offer information, resources, and spotlights on the recovery journey. This new approach is in lieu of the one-day National Recovery Month celebration, held last year at the Waterfront Park. Instead, BHS hopes by leveraging these platforms we can expand opportunities throughout the month for the recovery community to come together in celebration.

BHS invites you to get involved and bring San Diego's recovery community together in the following ways:

1. **Host a Recovery Day of Service Event:** Mobilize Recovery Day of Service is a constellation of connected public service events taking place nationally during September and October, harnessing the power of people in recovery and their allies for positive change in their

communities. Be the first to add an event in San Diego! For more information and FAQs check out the Day of Service Toolkit.

To learn more about Mobilize Recovery Day of Service and see Day of Service Toolkit resources:

- Mobilize Recovery Day of Service: <https://www.recoverydayofservice.org/events>
- Day of Service Toolkit: <https://www.recoverydayofservice.org/toolkit>

2. **Add your event to our shared calendar:** BHS is launching a shared calendar of events for the recovery community from August through October.

To add an event to the BHS shared calendar, submit via BHS National Recovery Month Activities Online Form:

- <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/bb249879251e4a19a36a35620582fa32>

3. **Invite BHS to your event** using the BHS Community Request Form! (*Please note, all requests should be made with a minimum 2–4 week advance notice*).

BHS Community Request Form:

- <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7e7b445a0deb41abbbf8237a3aadf7f2>

BHS can participate in the following ways:

- a. **Outreach/Tabling** – Request BHS staff to attend your event and engage with the attendees to share resources and information.
- b. **Presentation/Speaker** – BHS staff can provide presentations on various behavioral health topics.

4. **Submit a spotlight story** about an individual or organization. BHS will highlight stories of individuals and organizations throughout the year to share the community's resilience and spectrum of recovery journeys.

- **Individual Stories:** If you or a loved one has lived experience with recovery and a story that you'd like to share, let us know.
- **Organizations:** Nominate an organization providing outstanding service in the recovery field.

To share a spotlight story and/or nominate an organization, submit via BHS National Recovery Month Activities online form:

- <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/bb249879251e4a19a36a35620582fa32>

5. **Promote and share your materials** and/or resources for our National Recovery Month online toolkit. This toolkit will include information, resources, and ways to stay engaged throughout National Recovery Month. Please e-mail Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov with any handouts, flyers, and links that you would like to add to the online toolkit.

Stay tuned, as BHS plans to pilot future workshops, collaborating with members of the recovery community to uplift the voices of those impacted by substance use through unique and creative ways. A follow-up message will be issued to announce the launch of the National Recovery Month online toolkit and shared calendar.

If you have any questions, please e-mail us at Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov.

To stay connected on topics like substance misuse, overdose prevention, or recovery activities, sign up for the BHS National Recovery Month Activities Email List:

- <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/bb249879251e4a19a36a35620582fa32>

15th Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Conference - We Can't Wait!

BHS in partnership with Early Childhood stakeholders, will host the 15th Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Conference-We Can't Wait! on September 26 and 27, 2024. This hybrid event will be held at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina.

To learn more and register for the 15th Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Conference:

- Conference Details: <https://www.earlychildhoodmentalhealth-sandiego.com/>
- Register: <https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/newreg.php?eventid=801093&>

Caroline Smith Serves as New Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of the Health and Human Services Agency

Caroline Smith has been appointed as the Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). Succeeding Dr. Eric McDonald upon his July 2024 retirement.

With 18 years of experience within the County, Ms. Smith brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for policy and public service. In her prior role as Director of the Office of Economic Development and Government Affairs (EDGA), she worked with County departments and stakeholders to bolster the Board of Supervisors' Legislative Program with its economic strategies, arts, culture, and funding. Additionally, Ms. Smith spearheaded the implementation of programs to support those with severe behavioral health disorders, such as the CARE Act and Senate Bill (SB) 43. Previously, as the Assistant Director of Aging and Independent Services (AIS) at HHS, she developed impactful programs to support local seniors and their caregivers, such as the Alzheimer's Response Team Pilot project, a first responder crisis intervention program.

We warmly welcome Caroline Smith to her new role and look forward to her continued leadership in serving the needs of San Diego's communities.

Ebony Shelton Serves as New Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Appointed by unanimous vote by the County Board of Supervisors, Ebony Shelton serves as the new Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) as of June 14, 2024. Shelton is the first Afro-Latina in County history to serve in the role.

With nearly 30 years of experience working for the County, Ms. Shelton has dedicated her career to driving positive change and fostering a future of inclusivity and resilience for the San Diego community. Ms. Shelton started her career at the County at 19 years old and has held various roles in human resources and finance. Ms. Shelton has also had served in leadership roles including her previous position serving as the County's Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, where she oversaw multiple departments and managed the County's fiscal functions under the County's Finance and General Government group.

As the County's CAO, Ms. Shelton is responsible for implementing Board of Supervisor policies and the County's daily operations, including more than 20,000 employees who serve nearly 3.3 million people in the region.

As an Afro-Latina, Ms. Shelton is proud of her Black and Salvadoran ancestry. She understands the impacts of history on Black and Latino communities, and the importance of equity for all San Diego County residents.

Agency Leadership Announcement: Director of Policy and External Affairs

Aurora Kiviat, BHS' Assistant Director and Chief Operations Officer, will transition to a temporary role with the HHS Executive Office, as Director of Policy and External Affairs. In this capacity, she will

focus on working with the new CAO's Office, other Group Offices, and Board Offices as CAO Ebony Shelton begins to roll out her vision for the future of our County.

As BHS Assistant Director and Chief Operations Officer, Aurora leads health plan operations, contract support, and business operations. Aurora will continue to supervise her team and support key bodies of work during this temporary assignment. BHS looks forward to Aurora's continued leadership and warmly welcomes her into her new role with the HHS Executive Office.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LUKE BERGMANN', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

LUKE BERGMANN, Ph.D., Director
Behavioral Health Services

c: Caroline Smith, Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Aurora Kiviat Nudd, Assistant Director and Chief Operations Officer
Cecily Thornton-Stearns, Assistant Director and Chief Program Officer
Nadia Privara Brahms, Assistant Director, Chief Strategy and Finance Officer