

MEETING MINUTES

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

Date: July 9, 2025

Time: 2:30 PM

Location: Bishop COB Room 140, Lone Pine Wellness Center (satellite/virtual) and via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairperson, Michelle Saenz called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm. All attendees introduced themselves.

MEMBERSHIP IN ATTENDANCE

In Person: Supervisor William Wadelton, Michelle Saenz, Claude Peters

Virtual: none

COMMUNITY & STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

In Person: Gina Ellis, Karen Simerlink, Carri Coudek, Jody Veenker, Lucy Vincent, Melissa Best-Baker, Lori Bengochia, Liliana Fregoso, Vivian De La Riva

Virtual: Rose Colon, Shelley Scott

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Peters stated the Veterans component in the MHSA Plan didn't have a definition of stakeholders or what their roles are in that collaboration.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (ACTION ITEM)

Minutes from June 11, 2025 meeting.

Supervisor Wadelton moved to accept minutes as written, Mrs. Saenz seconded the motion. Motion carried: Ms. Saenz – Aye, Mr. Peters – Aye, Supervisor Wadelton - Aye. None opposed.

4. STAFF REPORTS (INFORMATIONAL ITEM)

- a. Behavioral Health Updates – Please refer to the Behavioral Health Staff Update Reports (attached) for all Staff Reports in this section. Mrs. Ellis told BHAB Members and attendees that Dr. Gail Zwier has returned as Deputy Director of Behavioral Health on a part-time basis as a retired annuitant. She has been meeting with staff and highlighting areas that need to be addressed. She is also helping with the development of the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Plan. Dr. Marta Lopez is providing remote clinical supervision through Motivo. Mrs. Ellis also shared about a new student intern working with child and family on a part-time basis, and another clinical trainee will begin working with our adult team, tentatively on August 14, 2025. She explained how Inyo County Behavioral Health (ICBH) has been working with other teams, including Child Protective Services (CPS) and others in the Social and Placement Services Division.
- b. Family Strengthening Team Updates – Jody Veenker
- c. DUI (Driving Under the Influence) Program Updates – Carri Coudek
- d. SUD Updates - Carri Coudek added that, in collaboration with Probation, SUD is starting a group for transitional aged youth – Young Adults
- e. Wellness Center Updates – Vivian De La Riva explained that 988 calls for Inyo County residents experiencing crisis are routed to our 24-hour Crisis line. Mrs. Ellis told BHAB members and meeting attendees that Public Works removed a problematic tree, that a new fence will be installed, and that the administrative team is working on a street parking issue.
- f. Progress House Updates – Mrs. Ellis told BHAB members and meeting attendees that a work group has been developed to process Progress House applications, including the development of case plans for new residents.

5. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (MHSA) PLAN 25-26 (DISCUSSION)

Mrs. Ellis thanked people who worked on the plan and the public hearing. The MHSA Plan 25-26 update was adopted and approved by the Board of Supervisors on July 8, 2025.

6. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (BHSA), (STANDING INFORMATIONAL ITEM)

Tabled until next month (August 13, 2025 BHAB meeting) for presentation.

7. CARE ACT UPDATES (INFORMATIONAL)

Mrs. Ellis explained that she will be meeting with the Lanterman Petris Services (LPS) conservator on this topic today. She will ask about getting CARE Act Updates added to the BH Staff Report Updates.

8. OLD BUSINESS (INFORMATIONAL OR DISCUSSION ITEM)

9. AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) (standing informational item)
- Mobile Crisis Response (Discussion)
- CARE Act updates

- Review of access to services

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 pm.

Inyo County Behavioral Health Program Updates

July 2025

Family Strengthening Team Updates – Jody Veenker

Services Provided

The Family Strengthening Team is currently serving 9 families and has 1 other in the orientation phase. One family closed out of services this month due to not being able to meet consistently to work on goals.

Key Data / Statistics

- Clients Served: 17 adults, 24 kids
- Referrals & Orientations: 1 family currently learning about program

Staffing Update

Jody has been supporting BH division with 3-4 PC CARE sessions weekly. Ethan and Stormie have been utilizing summer schedules to introduce children to outdoor sports and job application routines. They helped several children catch their first fish this month, get their first work permit, turn in resumes, and prep for interviews! They also helped a set of parents complete Triple P Standard so they are better able to maintain relationships and manage misbehaviors with positive parenting strategies.

Program Highlights

We are gearing up for our next Inyo Mono Wraparound social August 2. This will be a pool party and BBQ at Keoughs and we are anticipating between 50 to 75 participants again.

Challenges / Barriers

Our big interdivisional/interdepartmental challenge we are working to address is making sure that CANS assessments are being completed and shared through Child & Family Team meetings so that this universal assessment tool is used for all the case planning every agency serving the family uses. Every child receiving a behavioral health service already receives a CANS assessment, but the CFT review is an important step toward integrated service delivery.

DUI Program Update – Carri Coudek

Key Data / Statistics

June DUI:

ENROLLMENTS: Education (Wet & Reckless (W & R)) = 2, 3 months = 2, 18 months = 1

June DUI:

COMPLETIONS: (W & R) = 2, 3 months = 4, 9 months = 1 18 months = 2

Staffing Update

Two Addictions Counselor vacancies. Recruitment ongoing.

Inyo County Behavioral Health Program Updates

July 2025

Challenges / Barriers

- Ongoing vacancies
- Need for improved outreach strategies

SUD Program Update – Carri Coudek

Key Data / Statistics

- Billable, Active SUD clients: = 8
- (*Excludes Drug Court or ICJ groups)

Staffing Update

Two Addictions Counselor vacancies. Recruitment ongoing.

Program Highlights:

Southern Inyo Hospital Community Health Fair was a successful event for the Substance Abuse Disorder and DUI Programs. Cory and I provided information and outreach to the public, 60+ community members visited our resource table; local educators expressed the need to have our services in the schools, schedules and flyers were provided to law enforcement and fire department.

Challenges / Barriers

- Ongoing vacancies
- Need for improved outreach strategies

Wellness Center Updates – Vivian DeLaRiva

Services Provided

- Bishop Wellness Center: Groups, showers, laundry, cooking and feeding others, clothing & food support, Case Management, and supportive services.
- Lone Pine Wellness Center: Showers, laundry, Case Management, and supportive services.

Key Data / Statistics

- Bishop Wellness Center: 272 clients,
- Lone Pine Wellness Center: 17 clients

Staffing Update

- Acting Supervisor: Vivian DeLaRiva (coverage for Vanessa Ruggio)
- Part time position available

Program Highlights

- Lunch & Root beer floats provided by Olga & Pete, supply and hygiene donations
- Continued partnership with IMAH (client clothing needs)
- Food donations from Starbucks & Great Basin

Inyo County Behavioral Health Program Updates

July 2025

- Brandon DeHaven is giving haircuts to all that want them, looking good at the WC
- Leah Harris is well received at Lone Pine Wellness Center, and is doing a great job
- Bishop Wellness Center Groups are flourishing, participation continues to grow
- On-Call Crisis Response- NIH-8, ICJ-8, continued positive partnerships
- On-Call CCMU Response- In field-5, continued positive interactions with Law Enforcement & Community

Challenges / Barriers

- Staffing- Recruitment for open part time position

Progress House Updates – Gina McKinzey

Key Data / Statistics

- 5 residents currently
- Most recent resident arrived in June

Staffing Updates

- Position for the Residential Caregiver recently filled; awaiting start date

Program Highlights

- Our program emphasizes continuous client support, high engagement in Wellness Center Groups, outings, and unwavering assistance for individuals facing challenges. Residents especially enjoyed smores by the fire.

Challenges Barriers

- Ongoing recruitment due to staffing shortage