

Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health Behavioral Health Advisory Board

1965 Live Oak Blvd.
Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 822-7200

Minutes of the Conference Call

Thursday, August 13, 2020
5:00 p.m.

NOTICE: Requests for assistive listening devices or other accommodations, such as interpretive services, shall be made through the Executive Secretary (530) 822-7288 ext. 2275. Requests should be made at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Later requests will be accommodated to the extent feasible.

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Cluck called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Roll Call**

The following members were on the conference call: Chair Paul Cluck, Supervisor Gary Bradford, Supervisor Mike Ziegenmeyer, Vice Chair Lesley Clarkson and Dana Weeks.

The following members were excused: Manny Vasquez, Lupe Rose and Margery Hubbard

Also on the call: Rick Bingham, Assistant Director of Health and Human Services and Local Behavioral Health Director; Ymelda Mendoza-Flores, Program Manager, Karen Sangston and Sue Hopper, Executive Secretaries.

3. **Action Items:**

- a. **Approve July 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes:** Member Bradford moved to approve the July 9, 2020 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Member Cluck and carried as follows:

Aye votes: Board Members Clarkson, Weeks, Bradford, Ziegenmeyer and Cluck

Nay votes: None

Abstentions: None

4. **Program Update: A Better Way Shelter and Homelessness Update – Ymelda Mendoza-Flores, Program Manager**

Ms. Mendoza-Flores introduced herself as the Program Coordinator for Sutter County Homeless Services. Ms. Mendoza-Flores reports that the homeless shelter, known as Better Way, is located behind the Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health building at 1965 Live Oak Blvd, Yuba City. This is a 20-unit shelter with a 40-bed capacity. Residents are assigned to a case manager and a housing navigator. Security is on-site 24 hours per day and shelter monitors work throughout the day. Shelter monitors give residents access to the trailer for use of the fridge, microwave, common area and resource materials.

Better Way has been open since September 2019. Tours are not currently offered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Better Way has provided services to 114 people since their opening. 36 people have been permanently housed. The average age of clientele is 48 with the oldest being 73. Better Way works to connect individuals to benefits such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh, Primary Care, etc. The average income per resident is \$502 per month. Case managers work with these individuals to find ways to increase their income; either through applying for unemployment or augmenting their social security with employment. Since opening five individuals have obtained increased income and four residents have been established with primary care and behavioral health services and/or social security/disability benefits.

Better Way has had success in the past working through Sutter County One Stop although that agency is currently closed due to COVID-19. Services are being offered telephonically.

Feedback from clients is that they feel safe at the shelter. Rules are very strict – no visitors are allowed, and the curfew is strictly enforced. All residents must be on site at 9 p.m. weekdays and by 10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. There is no grace period. If curfew is missed residents can get some belongings and cannot come back on site until 7 a.m. and then they must meet with a case manager to explain why they were tardy. Case managers will determine whether they will be allowed back into the program or whether they will be discharged.

Better Way partners with the local food bank to donate food to the shelter twice per week. Hot dinners are provided once per week on Wednesdays by the First Lutheran Church. Prior to COVID-19 Two-Bits Café provided breakfast burritos every Monday.

Ms. Mendoza-Flores reports that also with Sutter County Homeless Services there is a Homeless to Housed (H2H) program. H2H was established in 2017 and was the first “shelter” - which was hotel based. 60 individuals were originally “housed” through this program. Every year since this program has provided shelter via hotels but is limited to 10 rooms at one time. Case management services are provided. H2H has recently provided services to 20 individuals and housed 45 into permanent housing. Due to the opening of Better Way, this last fiscal year was the final year for H2H.

Ms. Mendoza-Flores gave a brief presentation on Project Room Key. Project Room Key is in response to COVID-19 and is basically counties working together to provide mirrored services. Project Room Key provides non-congregate sheltering for individuals not needing hospitalization that test positive for or have been exposed to COVID-19. Housing is provided through motels and mobile homes. This project opened on March 28, 2020 and has provided services to 40 individuals. Three have been permanently housed and six have transferred to Better Way. Staff continue to work with these individuals for stabilization and permanent housing. Sutter county is currently experiencing a 6% vacancy rate – finding permanent low-income housing is very challenging.

Discussion on the difficulties of this population keeping their cell phone service on and/or losing/breaking their phones. Free phones are limited to two phones per year making it very hard to be able to keep in touch with this population.

Coordinated Entry is a one-stop-shop for homeless – all shelter services are connected – Hands of Hope for Sutter County and The Life Building Center in Yuba County – both are run by the same non-profit agency and services are mirrored. Face-to-face services are limited right now due to COVID-19. Trying to be creative by holding meetings such as AA and NA via Zoom.

Ms. Mendoza-Flores reports that residents can be terminated from the programs. Programs are low barrier and behavior based and follow the housing first model which means that participants are housed first and then offered services. Nothing is mandatory. All services are available. Clients that get terminated for behavior issues or breaking the rules can come back after 30 days. Clients with severe infractions cannot return for six months.

In closing Ms. Mendoza-Flores reports that two beds at Better Way are always reserved for homeless individuals being released off the Psychiatric Health Facility that meet criteria for the program.

In response to a question Ms. Mendoza-Flores states that a very low number of veterans are assisted through this program. Veterans are generally immediately connected to Veterans Services.

5. **Behavioral Health Director's Report – Rick Bingham, LMFT:**

Mr. Bingham reported on the following:

- Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) – Three-year Plan. This plan needs BHAB and Board of Supervisors approval by June 30 each year. Due to COVID this has been extended. The State has provided waivers effective July 1, 2020 which allows Plans to be submitted by June 30, 2021. The previously approved update will now extend through June 2021.
- Children's Services:
 - Workforce/Education Training (WET) Funding will be used to provide CSOC and TAY staff with Trauma Focused – CBT training.
 - CSOC/TAY staff will start using outdoor spaces for meeting with clients using social distancing protocols.
- Adult Outpatient:
 - BEST Team – this program specializes in serving adults 60+ with special needs. A supervisor has recently been hired for this team and is working to get the team up and running. This supervisor is also working with the HEART Team to help homeless individuals into services. The HEART also works with law enforcement when people are not compliant – such as illegal camping.
 - Open Access Clinic is operating three days per week right now. There appears to be no real change in the number of individuals being served in the clinic over the last couple of months. We plan to see an increase as Harmony Health reports they no longer have a therapist. We are discussing with them ways clients of theirs can use managed care to get their needs met.
 - Hmong/ Latino Centers – only utilizing telehealth right now.
- Behavioral Health – staff are doing a phenomenal job despite facing difficult circumstances/challenges. Staff are still working in the community; crisis and inpatient remain open; nursing teams delivering meds to the more chronic clients.
- Stabler Lane Facility opening has been delayed – hope to be in by the end of the month and accepting clients by mid-September.

6. **New Business:**

- Ms. Clarkson discussed the Eliminating Inequalities webinar being hosted by CIBHS. This is a free webinar being held on October 20, 2020.

7. **Old Business:** None Addressed.

8. **Public Comment:** None Addressed.

9. **Other Announcements/Correspondence:**

- a. Conference Call Etiquette Tips – information was included just for reference and guidelines.

10. **Adjournment:**

There being no further business brought forward Chair Cluck thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 6:04 p.m.