

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
Youth & Family COMMITTEE
2017-2018 Annual Report**

Submitted by Denise Nielsen, Chair
Finalize on 9/12/18

Youth & Family Committee members

Denise Nielsen, Committee Chair
Gane Brooking, BHAB
Margaret Cortese, BHAB
Marlen Torres, BHAB
Martie Miles, Aspiranet
Marika Collins, Casa Pacifica
Ken McDermott, Children’s Family Services
Heather Davidson, First 5 Ventura County

Crystal Cummings, Kids & Families Together
Laurie Jordan, Rainbow Connection
Regina Reed, SELPA
Tyler Baker-Wilkinson, Seneca
Dr. Steven Graff, Tri-Counties Regional Center
Lori Litel, United Parents
Sheri Long, Vista Real Charter Real High School

Organizations that participate occasionally or regularly

Ventura County Behavioral Health
Ventura County Probation Agency
Interface Children & Family Services

New Dawn
Vista del Mar Psychiatric Hospital

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MISSION

The BHAB Youth & Family Committee advocates for the continuum of care and development in the delivery of services for youth and their families, believing that addressing the unique needs of minors and their caregivers is essential to the health of the community.

INTRODUCTION

The BHAB Youth & Family Committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month from 10:00 to noon at the Ventura County Behavioral Health Administration building in Oxnard. Attendance and participation are open to the families of youth receiving mental health services from Ventura County Behavioral Health, service providers, Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) members, and anyone with an interest in the children and youth residing in Ventura County. The Youth and Family Committee is responsible to look into the needs, programs and services for children and youth, and to report on these matters to the BHAB.

2017-18 OBJECTIVES

- 1. Continuum of Crisis Stabilization Options**
 - a. Monitor the Crisis Stabilization Unit. Identify remaining gaps in the continuum of crisis services.
 - b. The Committee will receive ongoing updates from the Suicide Prevention workgroup.
- 2. Continuum of Care Reform**

Follow and evaluate the implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR). Identify further needs or gaps in services to children in foster care.
- 3. Community and Parent Outreach**
 - a. Engage community agencies to schedule presentations regarding the role and activities of this Committee.

- b. Recruit community members to serve on the Committee, and inform families about mental health services available.
- c. Create innovative strategies to increase parent participation in this Committee.
- d. Raise awareness of alcohol and drug use information. Actively disseminate alcohol and drug use prevention information to the community partners, including community-based organizations (CBOs), law enforcement, and school districts.
- e. Maintain the availability of relevant materials on the Ventura County Behavioral Health's WellnessEveryDay/SaludSiempre website.
- f. Continue to oversee the development of the family resource app.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Increased membership on this committee as a result of an update in the BHAB Bylaws.
2. Members disseminated information on the services available to children and youth and their parents/caregivers.
3. Members provided community support in the wake of the Thomas Fire.
4. Members continued to monitor and receive updates on the children's Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU).

2017-18 PRESENTATIONS

November 2017: Straight Up Reality Improv, presented by Katherine Kasmir.

February 2018: Alcohol & Drug Programs, presented by Richard LaPerriere.

April 2018: Collaborative Educational Supports (COEDS), presented by Aliya Maki.

May 2018: Ventura Early Intervention Prevention Services (VIPS), presented by Denise Pont.

June 2018: 2-1-1 Ventura County, presented by Kelly Brown.

CHALLENGES

1. The loss of Vista del Mar Psychiatric Hospital due to the Thomas Fire in early December 2017 negatively impacted the community and VCBH clients.
2. As a result of the Continuum of Care Reform, group homes have to convert their license or stop operating. Only two providers, Casa Pacifica and Seneca, operate a local Short-Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP).
3. Recruiting foster families, including emergency foster families, who could serve as an alternative to STRTP, is problematic.
4. Prevention and early intervention services for children ages 5 and under are insufficient. Parents/caregivers and preschool teachers are not attuned to the mental health needs of young children.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. The committee is eager to design a Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovative project that will focus on early intervention for young children exhibiting signs of emerging mental health needs but who do not qualify for services currently available. The project will target preschool teachers and engage academic institutions and local colleges to develop a curriculum for teachers and enhance the current coursework.
2. Utilize the results of parent surveys administered by United Parents to understand the needs and concerns of parents and caregivers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a one-page flyer on the BHAB Youth & Family Committee and distribute copies at various community events.
2. Educate parents and caregivers, particularly those with children in private preschools.
3. Understand the needs and concerns of teachers, from preschool through high school.

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2018-19 OBJECTIVES

1. Continuum of Care

- a. Follow and evaluate the implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR). Identify further needs or gaps in services to children in foster care.
- b. Monitor the Crisis Stabilization Unit. Identify remaining gaps in the continuum of crisis services for both children covered by Medi-Cal and children with private insurance.
- c. Advocate for the availability of psychiatric hospital beds in the county for the pediatric population. Ensure communication and care coordination of medical information between care providers.

2. Community and Parent Outreach

- a. Engage community agencies to schedule presentations regarding the role and activities of this Committee.
- b. Recruit community members to serve on the Committee, and inform families about mental health services available.
- c. Create innovative strategies to learn about parents/caregivers' needs and concerns.
- d. Raise awareness of alcohol and drug use information. Actively disseminate alcohol and drug use prevention information to the community partners, including community-based organizations (CBOs), law enforcement, and school districts.
- e. Maintain the availability of relevant materials on the Ventura County Behavioral Health's [wellnesseveryday/saludsiempre](#) website.
- f. Continue to oversee the development of the family resource app.
- g. Raise awareness of services for children ages 0-5 and access to those services.