

FY 2020 – 2021 Annual Report

**THE SAN FRANCISCO
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION**



Prepared for

**The Mayor and Board of Supervisors of the
City and County of San Francisco**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) of San Francisco submits this FY 2021 Annual Report in accordance with the California Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 5604.2. The Commission met twelve times during the year with a robust attendance on the part of membership. All meetings continued to be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commission meetings consisted of salient topics, including Mental Health SF legislation, presentations, discussions, and public participation.

Commission input and feedback were used in preparing the California Planning Council Data Notebook studying local residential facilities. Three program reviews were conducted by Commissioners with recommendations forwarded to the Director of Behavioral Health Services. Three Resolutions were proposed and forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. And two new committees were established to research residential beds, availability of telepsychiatry, and issues raised by the pandemic.

According to research findings from the Johns Hopkins University, about 14 percent of Americans reported symptoms of serious psychological distress in April 2020 during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic. The isolation of “Shelter in Place” also resulted in an increase in domestic violence cases, child abuse cases, suicide in Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) cases, depression, anxiety, trauma PTSD, and increased alcohol consumption as a coping mechanism.

The pandemic, likewise, continued to affect the work of the BHC. We were not able to meet our contract terms: we made three out of five site visits, which continued to be virtual, and propose three out of the ten resolutions. Three additional commendations were awarded to individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions in serving our most vulnerable citizens.

The Commission pursued rebuilding its membership. In 2020-2021, seven Commissioners out of 17 had legal standing, of which three Commissioners were new appointees, seven seats were vacant (including the Board of Supervisors seat), three had termed out (each had two three-year terms) and three Commissioners were waiting reappointment. A recent State law, mandating Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions, amended the legislation to three-year terms for Commissioners/Board members, and was silent on reappointment requirements.

The behavioral health needs in the County continue to increase despite innovative programs (e.g., services for seniors living in the Tenderloin, transgender support, vocational training, school-based behavioral health programs). The BHC strongly recommends: adopting a comprehensive continuum of care system; creating culturally affirming and evidence-based practices for all services; strengthening the integration of substance use and mental health treatment to ensure both disorders are treated effectively; providing access to same day services for prescription medications; ensuring every client has a WRAP Plan with an advanced directive; and increasing the number of therapists. Homelessness and mental health are often intertwined. Thus, creating housing with supportive services and expanding our rapidly disappearing long-term board and care programs are critical.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The 2020–2021 fiscal year has been productive and challenging for the newly–constituted San Francisco BHC. The BHC moved forward with the hiring of a new Executive Director, through our contract with the San Francisco Mental Health Education Funds (SFMHEF), an organization that serves as the administrative arm of the Commission. In addition, the BHC continued its commitment to assuring that the Commission membership is more diverse. This year, we focused our outreach and recruitment efforts on increasing the number of African American and Asian American Pacific Island residents who apply for BHC Commission seats.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the ability of the Commissioners to meet in person. Throughout the year, the BHC provided access to the public through monthly virtual Zoom meetings held on the third Wednesday of each month, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Even though COVID-19 had an adverse effect on our ability to conduct in-person site visits, the BHC Co-Chairs (Richelle Slota and Carletta Jackson-Lane) were able to incorporate virtual interviews via Zoom with Executive Director/COO Marvin Davis and the clinical staff of Felton Institute. The BHC also chose to conduct a virtual review of the Senior Adult Clinical Program, which is one of the cornerstone programs of the Institute’s Mental Health Clinical Service Model. Our written report included a positive clinical evaluation, interviews with clients of the program via Zoom in separate rooms, and a detailed summary. The Commissioners also established, through the BHC Site Visit Committee, a COVID-19 Virtual Site Visit Questionnaire. The questionnaire was used in a virtual visit with the Dimensions Clinic, a program that provides comprehensive medical and mental health services to low-income or homeless LGBTQ+ youth (aged 12 to 25 years) living in San Francisco. The interview with the Dimensions staff was positive. Due to COVID mandates, no in person interviews were conducted with their clients.

The BHC also sponsored several resolutions and accommodations during 2020 – 2021 and presented them to the Mayor’s Office and Board of Supervisors. Some of the resolutions and commendations are included as follows:

- The Asian American Pacific Islander’s (AAPI’s) Anti Hate Crime Resolution in support of San Francisco’s AAPI Community
- A resolution/commendation for exemplary service honoring Marlo Simmons, Interim Director, SF Behavioral Health Services
- A commendation for outstanding community mental health services presented to Dr. Mary Ann Jones, PhD and CEO of the Westside Community Mental Health Services

In early spring 2021 the BHC held a Strategic Planning Retreat that resulted in a formal list of recommendations for better serving our mental health clients and consumers.

Respectfully,

Carletta Jackson-Lane, JD, Co-Chair

INTRODUCTION

The Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) of San Francisco, formerly known as the Mental Health Board (MHB), established in 1983 as mandated by the Bronzan-McCorquodale Act within the Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 5604.2, is responsible for the following:

- Review and evaluate the community's behavioral health needs, services, facilities, and special problems
- Review County agreements entered into pursuant to Section 5650
- Advise the Board of Supervisors and the Director of Behavioral Health Services (BHS) as to any aspect of the local Behavioral Health system
- Review and approve the procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement at all stages of the planning process
- Submit an Annual Report to the Mayor and Supervisors on the needs and performance of the Behavioral Health system
- Review and make recommendations on applicants for the appointment of the director of Behavioral Health services prior to the vote of the governing body. The Commission shall be included in the selection process prior to the vote of the governing body
- Review and comment of the County's/City's performance outcome data and communicate its findings to the California Behavioral Health Planning Council
- Assess the impact of the realignment of services from the State to the County on services delivered to clients and on the local community

The Mission

The Behavioral Health Commission of San Francisco represents and ensures the inclusion of the diverse voices of consumers, citizens, and stakeholders in advising how behavioral health services are administered and provided.

Through its State and County mandates, the Behavioral Health Commission advises, reviews, advocates, and educates; with the aim of having that advice integrated, incorporated, and reflected in implementation of Behavioral Health policy; with the ultimate goal of ensuring quality behavioral health services.

Adopted October 12, 1994

**SAN FRANCISCO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION
MEMBERS AND STAFF**

FYE June 2020	FYE June 2021
Seat 1, vacant	Seat 1, Bahlam Javier Vigil, MA
Seat 2, vacant	Seat 2, vacant
Seat 3, Carletta Jackson-Lane, JD****	Seat 3, Carletta Jackson-Lane, JD
Seat 4, Dawson Emmett Cooper II*****	Seat 4, Terezie Bohrer, RN, MSW, CLNC
Seat 5, Judith Klain, MPH	Seat 5, Judith Klain, MPH
Seat 6, Arthur Curry****	Seat 6, Arthur Curry/vacant*****
Seat 7, Gregory Ledbetter****	Seat 7, Gregory Ledbetter****
Seat 8, vacant	Seat 8, Stephen Banuelos
Seat 9, Richelle Slota, MA	Seat 9, Richelle Slota, MA
Seat 10, Harriette Stevens, Ed.D.*	Seat 10, Harriette Stevens, Ed.D.*
Seat 11, Judy Zalazar Drummond, MA****	Seat 11, Judy Drummond, MA/vacant*****
Seat 12, Toni Parks	Seat 12, Toni Parks
Seat 13, Marylyn Tesconi, MA***	Seat 13, vacant
Seat 14, Dancer/vacant***	Seat 14, vacant
Seat 15, Ulash Thakore-Dunlap, MFT*****	Seat 15, Ulash Thakore-Dunlap, MFT*****
Seat 16, Idell Wilson	Seat 16, Idell Wilson****
Seat 17, Catherine Stefani, JD, LL.M** Supervisor	Ahsha Safai+ Supervisor

* Starting February 1, 2020, termed-out Commissioners may attend BHC meetings and vote until a new Commissioner appointed by a district supervisor or the Rules Committee

** Supervisor Catherine Stefani resigned in April 2020

*** Commissioners resigned after June 2020

**** Commissioners waiting for reappointment

***** Commissioners resigned after July 2021

+ Supervisor Ahsha Safai never attended meetings

Staff

Geoffrey Grier, Executive Director

SAN FRANCISCO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN FY 2020-2021

A. RESOLUTIONS AND COMMENDATIONS

RESOLUTIONS

- BHC Meeting, February 17, 2021: Resolved the San Francisco Behavioral Health Commission urges the City and County of San Francisco to provide additional police training and alternative and more appropriate first responder series 24/7 to adults experiencing mental health crisis.
- BHC Meeting, April 21, 2021: The San Francisco Behavioral Health Commission's Anti-hate position toward Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and urging the appointment of members of the API community to the Commission
- BHC Minutes, Jan. 20, 2021: Resolved that the San Francisco Behavioral Health Commission commend Marlo Simmons, MPH, Acting Director of Behavioral Health Services in the role of Director of Mental Health Service Act programs, led a team that developed numerous innovative programs and responded to community needs.

CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION

- BHC Minutes, July 15, 2020
 - Felton Institute for their work on Suicide Prevention
 - Mother Brown's Kitchen for the wonderful work in providing COVID-19 tests in the Bayview Hunter's Point neighborhood
- BHC Minutes, Sept. 16, 2020: Dr. Mary Ann Jones, CEO of Westside Mental Health Services for her lifelong advocacy for mental health services in underserved communities
- BHC Minutes, Feb.17, 2021: BART Officer Eric Hofstein for exceptional service in aiding and supporting people experiencing mental health crises at BART stations.

B. PROGRAM REVIEWS

- Felton Institute, Family Service Agency, San Francisco, July 30, 2021
- Alkov Dimensions Clinic: COVID-19 Survey Questions for Behavioral Health Program Directors, August 8, 2021
- Episcopal Community Services–San Francisco: Program Review of housing and workforce development programs, July 2021

C. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS AT COMMISSION MEETINGS INCLUDED

- Best Practices Training conducted by Theresa Comstock, Executive Director, California Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions, September 2020
- Mental Health Services Act Updates, Theresa Yu, BHS Acting Director, Oct. 2020
- SF Behavioral Health Commission Annual Retreat, March 2021
- Transgender 101 & DHR Gender Inclusion Policy Training, March and May 2021

Note: All agendas and minutes can be found at www.sfgov.org/mental_health, or <https://sfbos.org/behavioral-health-commission>

COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES

In 2020-2021, the BHC's two Standing Committees are described below, and followed by additional activities conducted on behalf of the Commission.

1. Implementation Committee: Chair: Ms. Jackson-Lane, Ms. Parks, Ms. Slota, and Ms. Drummond

The Implementation Committee has continued to push forward and incorporate major issues facing the behavioral health population resulting from COVID-19 and the impact on funding for Behavioral Health Services for the residents of San Francisco.

In furthering that agenda, the Implementation Committee addressed the fact that, disproportionately, over 80 percent of the population in the County jail are part of the chronic homeless population, African American and suffering from mental health challenges. Housing, or the lack thereof, high cost and the need for on-site direct mental health and substance use/misuse services continue to be a problem in San Francisco. We have homeless persons suffering from chronic behavioral health issues throughout the City in multiple neighborhoods--why not give them direct quality mental health and behavioral health services where they live?

2. Site Visit Committee: Chair: Ms. Richelle Slota; various Commission members

The Site Visit Committee worked to help assure the evaluation of the community's behavioral health needs, services, facilities, and special problems and that mandated program reviews were implemented.

3. Commissioners' contributions to the mission of the BHC are as follows:

- Met with Supervisors and their staffs
- Membership on the California Association of Local Behavioral Boards and Commissions (Dr. Harriette Stevens (President of this organization)
- BHC representative on the DPH interview panel for the new Behavioral Health Services Director (Dr. Stevens)
- Met monthly with Dr. Hillary Kunins, the new BHS Director
- Represented the BHC on the Crisis Intervention Teamwork Group (Ms. Terezia Bohrer Chaired the CIT Work Group)
- Attended meetings with Mega Black San Francisco, a group that Mayor Breed put together seeking reparations with funding redirected from the police department (Mr. Gregory Ledbetter)
- Attended public community meetings as a representative of the Commission

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In FY 2020-21, the Commission identified several needs for services and recommended:

- Continue supporting Mental Health San Francisco.
- Increase DPH/Behavioral Health Services funding for culturally responsive resources and services for case management services. Evidence-based results need to also be included.
- Ensure regular Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for all Police and Sheriffs.
- Increase behavioral health services and supportive housing for people who are homeless.
- Increase housing, board and care residential facilities and address the homeless crisis which is intrinsically entwined with issues related to mental health and substance use.
- Advocate for a Comprehensive Continuum of Care system within BHS.
- Strengthen the integration of substance use and mental health treatment to ensure that both conditions are treated effectively.
- Provide access to same day services for treatment and prescription medications.
- Increase the number of therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists in BHS to decrease waiting time and increase the ability to serve all in need, including TAY appropriate services. Provide enhanced therapeutic services, namely co-occurring disorder and trauma-informed services that are culturally affirming.

In the coming fiscal year, the BHC aims to become more involved in decision making and in working more closely with the Board of Supervisors, the Department of Public Health, the Health Commission, and the DPH/Behavioral Health Services staff.

