

**THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION (BHC)  
OF SAN FRANCISCO**

**Annual Report: July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023**



**Prepared for**

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

**Submitted: June 14, 2024**

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) of San Francisco submits this Annual Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 in accordance with the California Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 5604.2. The commission met 11 times during this period with good attendance on the part of the membership. The end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency meant that the state's declaration to hold virtual meetings also ended. After we returned to in-person meetings, we often lacked quorum and were unable to vote on many agenda items. Ten commissioners out of 17 had legal standing, and seven seats were vacant. Nevertheless, the meetings and discussions continued to focus on important presentations and decisions and included the public's participation.

The themes in 2022-2023 focused on supportive services and housing, the grievance process, and the recruitment and training of BHC staff and commissioners. The BHC conducted three program reviews with recommendations forwarded to the Director of Behavioral Health Services. Two resolutions were proposed and forwarded to the Board of Supervisors (see detailed list in Section V, *BHC Accomplishments*).

Further, the commission submitted reports from three program reviews/site visits. The site reviews/visits were conducted in-person and required additional coordination in scheduling meeting times due to the aftereffects of the COVID-19 mandates. Two of the site visits did not occur until early 2024. Despite these drawbacks, we learned a great deal about the organizations, their staffs and clients, and the services they provided. The site visit team reports indicated a need for follow-up visits to some of the programs, or for the organizations to make presentations to the entire commission. The 2-person visits in some cases needed more discussion that involved all BHC commissioners.

We hosted four educational presentations that included speakers from Conard House, SF Behavioral Health Services (BHS), the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards/Commissions, and various mental health service providers.

The BHC also submitted its annual survey to the CA Behavioral Health Planning Council's Data Notebook. In preparing the survey, the BHC staff met with BHS staff to review the **performance outcome data** for San Francisco and report on the county's delivery of behavioral health services. The electronic report was submitted to the BHS director and Planning Council.

The behavioral health needs in San Francisco continued to increase despite innovative programs (e.g., transgender support, vocational training). In FY 2023-23, the BHC continued to advocate for culturally affirming and evidence-based practices for all services, strengthening the integration of substance use and mental health treatment to ensure that both disorders are treated more effectively, and for increasing the number of therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists working in the Public Health and Behavioral Health Services departments.

Many of our citizens continue to face enormous challenges in San Francisco trying to address issues related to mental health wellness and substance use and their intersections with homelessness. With the additional challenges of trying to maintain a quorum of commission members and having too many vacancies on the commission, we did not achieve all our goals, such as in **implementing** the five program reviews or resolutions we had planned for the year. However, as we continue to advocate on behalf of adults and families in San Francisco experiencing severe mental illness, we expect to continue to identify and execute program reviews and resolutions in the coming year.

At the annual BHC retreat, we will discuss in more detail our community priority issues for the program reviews and resolutions. The major issues we plan to address will include:

- Mental health challenges and substance use in all educational settings.
- Need for transgender training and support for behavioral health programs and staff.
- Better access to behavioral health services for elderly and isolated seniors and those with disabilities while struggling with mental health challenges in San Francisco.
- The need for more open interactions between Homelessness and Supportive Housing and the various communities around the services that are required.

**Acknowledgements**

We want to express our sincere gratitude to all the members of the BHC Rules and Reports Committee and the SF Mental Health Education Funds Board who worked diligently to help develop this report. The committee members included: Commissioners Lisa Wynn, Carletta Jackson-Lane, Vice-President of SF MHEF, Kescha Mason, Alex Humphrey, Harriette S. Stevens, Committee Chair and President of SF MHEF, and BHC Clerk Amber Gray.



Standing from left: Peter Murphy (visitor); members: Lisa Wynn, Bahlam Vigil, Stephen Banuelos, Harriette Stevens, Lisa Williams, Keisha Mason, Alex Humphrey (visitor). Seated: members Liza Murawski, Carletta Jackson-Lane.

## II. INTRODUCTION

The BHC of San Francisco, formerly named the Mental Health Board, was established in 1983 as mandated by the Bronzan-McCorquodale Act within the Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 5604.2. The BHC is committed to the following duties:

- 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 care 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 San Francisco’s 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 on 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 of BHC***

*The Behavioral Health Commission of San Francisco represents and ensures the inclusion of the diverse voices of local 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 the implementation of Behavioral Health policy; with the ultimate goal of ensuring quality behavioral health services.*

Adopted October 12, 1994

**III. SAN FRANCISCO BHC COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF**

<b>FYE June 2022</b>	<b>FYE JUNE 2023</b>
Seat 1, Bahlam Javier Vigil, MA	Seat 1, Bahlam Javier Vigil, MA
Seat 2, Genesis Vasconez	Seat 2, Genesis Vasconez
Seat 3, Carletta Jackson-Lane, JD*	Seat 3, Carletta Jackson-Lane, JD
Seat 4, vacant	Seat 4, vacant
Seat 5, vacant	Seat 5, vacant
Seat 6, Kescha S. Mason, M.Div., MCL	Seat 6, Kescha S. Mason, M.Div., MCL
Seat 7, Vacant	Seat 7, vacant
Seat 8, Stephen Banuelos, Retired, LCSW	Seat 8, Stephen Banuelos, Retired, LCSW
Seat 9, vacant	Seat 9, vacant
Seat 10, Harriette S. Stevens, Ed.D.*	Seat 10, Harriette S. Stevens, Ed.D.
Seat 11, Lisa Williams	Seat 11, Lisa Williams
Seat 12, Toni Parks*	Seat 12, Toni Parks
Seat 13, Lisa Wynn	Seat 13, Lisa Wynn
Seat 14, Liza M. Murawski	Seat 14, Liza M. Murawski
Seat 15, vacant	Seat 15, vacant
Seat 16, vacant	Seat 16, vacant
Seat 17, vacant <sup>+</sup>	Seat 17, vacant

\* Starting February 1, 2020, termed-out commissioners could attend BHC meetings and vote until a new commissioner was appointed by a district supervisor or the SF Rules Committee.

+ No Board of Supervisor member attended meetings in these years.

**BHC Staff**

Amber Gray, Clerk, 3/1/ 2022–present

#### **IV. LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS**

We are thrilled to present the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the San Francisco Behavioral Health Commission (BHC). Fiscal year 2022-2023 was a difficult time for the commission. Like many Americans, we looked forward to a life without the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we remained steadfast in our advocacy for the mental health needs of San Francisco's residents.

This year, much of our work focused on identifying ways to improve the grievance process within Behavioral Health Services (BHS). We continued to collaborate with BHS to identify and implement better alternatives for ensuring a more transparent and user-friendly grievance system. Further, we advocated for the establishment of culturally affirming and evidence-based practices across all programs, and for strengthening the integration of substance use and mental health treatment for individuals with co-occurring disorders.

In 2022-2023, our key accomplishments included successful site visits to various organizations, such as Conard House and its affiliated programs. These visits were instrumental in helping us better understand the challenges service providers and clients (alike) face. Additionally, our commission hosted several educational presentations, with representatives from Tipping Point, the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards/Commissions, and from various mental health providers. These sessions were invaluable in informing us about some of the issues we need to understand and respond to in the future.

Looking ahead, we are fully committed to addressing the key priorities of our community. For instance, housing remains a critical issue for many of our residents, and we'll continue to push for more supportive housing options and services tailored to the needs of those experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use disorders. We understand the importance of tackling mental health and substance use in educational settings and the need for continued transgender support and training. We are dedicated to improving access to mental health services for vulnerable populations and fostering more open interactions between BHS and the communities we are mandated to serve.

We express our deepest gratitude to the BHC Rules and Reports Committee members and the SF Mental Health Education Funds Board, Inc. for their dedication in developing this report. Special thanks go to Commissioners Lisa Wynn, Carletta Jackson-Lane, Kescha Mason, Alex Humphrey, Harriette S. Stevens, Committee Chair, and Amber Gray, BHC Clerk.

Sincerely,

Bahlam Javier Vigil and Stephen Banuelos, Co-Chairs, SF BHC

## V. BHC ACCOMPLISHMENTS: July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023

### A. Resolutions and Commendations\*

- BHC Minutes, May 16, 2024: Resolved, the SF Behavioral Health Commission commends the **Booker T. Washington Community Health Center** in providing culturally relevant programs and a holistic approach to meet the needs of vulnerable citizens and recommends expanding the service model to other SF communities.
- BHC Minutes June 13, 2024: Resolved, the SF Behavioral Health Commission calls upon the SF Mayor, Board of Supervisors and Department of Public Health to invest funds to improve the standard and quality of the **grievance process** within SF BHS.

### B. Program Reviews

- **Conard House**, October 19, 2022. The BHC site team expressed several concerns and suggested that the Conard House staff make a follow-up presentation to the BHC to address unresolved issues identified, such as staffing and building maintenance issues.
- **Eldorado Hotel (9th Street): Conard–SRO Supportive Housing**, February 26, 2024. The BHC site team recommended that the Eldorado staff make a follow-up presentation to explain why only 37 out of 57 beds were occupied. The contractor should identify what additional support is needed to assure that the other non-housed residents of San Francisco are getting the housing services they need.
- Apartments: **Conard Supportive Services**, February 29, 2024. The review team observed that clients were not feeling safe and there was a need for staff training focused on mental illness and cross-cultural competencies.

### C. Educational Presentations at Commission Meetings

- **Conard House**: Discussion on Conard’s behavioral health placement process, outpatient services, and supportive housing resources, Louise Foo, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Services and Anne Quaintance, CEO/Executive Director, January 18, 2023.
- **SWT (Stephanie White-Tillman) Consultants**: Brief presentation on the need to have a culturally competent youth assessment and the lack of an assessment relates to being a public health issue, January 18, 2023
- **Booker T. Washington Community Service Center**: Presentation by Commissioner Wynn on the behavioral health programs and services offered at the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center. The center provides culturally relevant services and uses a holistic approach to address the needs of the community they serve, April 23, 2023.

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\* Although the BHC identified programs and issues to address in 2022-23, without quorum the commissioners were unable to formally approve the resolutions or commendations until the spring of 2024.



- **California Association of Local Behavioral Health and Boards/Commissions (CALBHB/C):** Support is provided to all 59 of CA’s local and statewide Advisory Boards. Commissioner Stevens provided regular updates on the association’s work.

*Note:* All BHC agendas and minutes can be found at

<https://www.sf.gov/departments/behavioral-health-commission>

#### D. BHC Committees and Activities

1. From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, in addition to the Executive Committee, the BHC’s Standing Committees included:
  - **Implementation Committee:** Steven Banuelos, Chair; focused on the need for housing to be a major part of policy conversation and that the housing needs of the homeless population needs to be highlighted.
  - **Site Visit Committee:** Balham Vigil, Chair; 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.
2. Activities conducted on behalf of the BHC consisted of:
  - BHC co-chairs met **monthly** with BHS Director Dr. Hillary Kunins.
  - Commissioners attended **public health-related community meetings** in their capacity as representatives of the commission.
  - Elected member of the **CALBHB/C Governing Board:** Commissioner Stevens.
  - Participation in **statewide board and commissioner and staff trainings** provided by the CALBHB/C: BHC Commissioners Muraswki, Stevens, Wynn.

#### E. BHC Staff Activities

Clerk Gray’s contributions to the mission of the BHC included regular participation in CALBHB/C’s staff trainings and quarterly meetings.

### VI. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

The annual update on the SF Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Three-Year Draft Report and Budget was postponed in 2022-23 due to the development of the statewide realignment plan. The proposed plan would expand and modernize the State’s mental health system and housing for citizens living on our streets. An update was given at the BHC meeting on March 21, 2024.

### VII. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS – HIGHLIGHTS


BHC Commissioners identified the following needs and recommendations:

- Advocate for **behavioral health services and supportive housing** for people who are homeless and experiencing acute mental health issues and substance use disorders.
- Find ways to make the **grievance process** more transparent and user friendly.

- Assure that **culturally affirming and evidence-based practices** are part of all services. The BHC continues its work to assure that DPH-funded behavioral health providers are providing effective, equitable, and high-quality care and services that are responsive to clients with diverse cultural health beliefs and practices and communication needs.
- Provide regular **training opportunities** for BHC commissioners so they are more effective. Ethics training is required per GOV 53234 – 53235.2. According to guidance from the CALBHB/C, new and veteran commissioners will gain a better understanding of the duties of California’s mental/behavioral health boards/commissions through intensive in-person and online training (<https://www.calbhbc.org/training.html>).
- Promote the **integration of substance use and mental health treatment** to ensure both conditions are treated effectively. The primary care physician, behavioral health care manager and psychiatrist must work as a team to provide care and monitor patient progress as part of an effective continuum of care system.

**VIII. SAMPLE BHC RESOLUTION**

**COMMENDATION RESOLUTION**



**THIS RESOLUTION COMMENDS**

**BOOKER T. WASHINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER  
“FEEL WELL–BLACK WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH  
PROMOTION INITIATIVE”**

May 15, 2024

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WHEREAS, the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center (BTWCSC) has been dedicated to serving families in San Francisco for over 100 years, providing ongoing support and services to its Black/African American families and individuals.

WHEREAS the goal of the “Fillmore, Feel Well – BTWCSC Black Wellness Initiative” is to enhance the overall health and well-being of Black individuals and families by improving access to health and social services, fostering community building through spiritual and cultural activities, and offering healing opportunities for those facing trauma, depression, addiction, and mental health challenges.

WHEREAS, through a unique partnership with Black-led anchor institutions and organizations in the Fillmore/Western Addition area, BTWCSC collaborates with Black health professionals and social service providers to combat anti-Black racism, reduce barriers to wellness opportunities, and bring back Black joy amidst multiple challenges facing the community.

WHEREAS BTWCSC aims to leverage its safe space beyond its physical walls, ensuring the regeneration and recovery of the Black community in San Francisco by progressively assisting participants in navigating social systems, promoting life skills, and building self-sufficient Black families.

WHEREAS, BTWCSC collaborates with Black/African American participants and culturally responsive healthcare providers to offer safe spaces, scientifically sound information, and wellness opportunities, including workshops and Black safe spaces designed to decrease isolation, offer cultural enrichment, and provide health education, substance use/abuse prevention, and violence prevention workshops.

WHEREAS BTWCSC also provides opportunities for spiritual and emotional enrichment through soul suppers, memorials, social events, field trips, and educational opportunities, creating sacred spaces for Black joy, grief, relief, nourishment, and healing, while maintaining community alliances and overseeing program management and outreach efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Behavioral Health Commission recognizes and commends the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center for its exceptional dedication and service in promoting Black health and wellness, and assisting families in San Francisco, in overcoming as they overcome many health and behavioral health challenges.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Behavioral Health Commission respectfully requests the Board of Supervisors and Mayor to officially commend the outstanding work and impact of the San Francisco Booker T. Washington Community Service Center.

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Stephen Banuelos, BHC Co-Chair

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Bahlam Javier Vigil, BHC Co-Chair