

Attachment A –
BWC Amended Bylaws
Third Amendment (Clean Copy)

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL WELLNESS COMMISSION
BYLAWS

AMENDED by the Behavioral Wellness Commission on 7/21/2021, 3/20/2024, and 09/17/2025
APPROVED by the SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS on 10/05/2021, 5/7/2024 &
10/07/25 (pending)

ARTICLE I

NAME

- A. The name of this commission shall be the Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness Commission.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

- A. The Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness Commission (hereinafter BWC or Commission) exists as an advisory commission to the Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness (hereinafter Department or Behavioral Wellness) and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors (hereinafter Board of Supervisors) regarding the County's provision of mental health and substance use disorder programs and services (hereinafter behavioral health services).
- B. The BWC is established as required by Section 5604 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, with membership appointed by the Board of Supervisors. In accordance with Health and Safety Code Sections 11805, the Commission also serves as Santa Barbara County's Advisory Board on Alcohol and Other Drug Problems.
- C. As set forth in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604.2, the duties of the BWC shall include, but not be limited to the following:
1. Review and evaluate the community's public behavioral health needs, services, facilities, and special problems in a facility within the county or jurisdiction where mental health or substance use disorder evaluations or services are being provided including, but not limited to, schools, emergency departments, and psychiatric facilities.

2.
 - a. Review County agreements entered into pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5650.
 - b. BWC may make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding concerns identified within these agreements.
 - c. Advise the Board of Supervisors and the Director of Behavioral Wellness as to any aspect of the local behavioral health systems.
 - d. BWC may request assistance from the local patients' rights advocates when reviewing and advising on mental health or substance use disorder evaluations or services provided in public facilities with limited access.
3.
 - a. Review and approve the procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement at all stages of the planning process.
 - b. Involvement shall include individuals with lived experience of mental illness, substance use disorder, or both, and their families, community members, advocacy organizations, and behavioral health professionals. It shall also include other professionals who interact with individuals living with mental illnesses or substance use disorders on a daily basis, such as education, emergency services, employment, health care, housing, public safety, local business owners, social services, older adults, transportation, and veterans.
4. Submit an annual report to the Board of Supervisors on the needs and performance of the County's behavioral health system.
5.
 - a. Review and make recommendations on applicants for the appointment of the Director of Behavioral Wellness.
 - b. BWC shall be included in the selection process prior to the vote of the Board of Supervisors.
6. Review and comment on the County's performance outcome data and communicate its findings to the California Behavioral Health Planning Council.

D. In addition, the BWC shall perform the following duties:

1. In accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5803(a)(4), approve County proposals prepared in response to the State Department of Health Care Services (hereafter DHCS) requests for new County systems of care.
2.
 - a. In accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5963.03(b)(1), the Commission, established pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604, shall conduct a public hearing on the draft integrated plan and annual updates of the County's Integrated Plan for Behavioral Health Services and Outcomes at the close of the 30-day comment period.
 - b. Each adopted integrated plan and update shall include any substantive written recommendations for revisions.
 - c. The adopted integrated plan or update shall summarize and analyze the recommended revisions.
 - d. The Commission shall review the adopted integrated plan or update and make recommendations to Behavioral Wellness for revisions.
 - e. Behavioral Wellness shall provide an annual report of written explanations to the Board of Supervisors and the State Department of Health Care Services for substantive recommendations made by the Commission that are not included in the final integrated plan or update. "Substantive recommendations made by the Commission" means a recommendation that is brought before the Commission and approved by a majority vote of the membership present at a public hearing of the Commission that has established a quorum.
3. Assess the impact of the legislative realignment of services from the State to the County on services delivered to consumers/clients and on the local community.
4. Consult with the Director of Behavioral Wellness about the provision of services, establishment of facilities, special programs, identification of gaps in program services, contracting for services or facilities, and recommending priorities for resources allocation and other matters necessary or desirable in accomplishing the purposes of applicable state law. This shall include consultation as determined by the Director of Behavioral Wellness regarding the Assisted Outpatient Treatment service planning and delivery process, in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5348(a)(2), and regarding the service planning and delivery process of new County systems of care, in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5806.
5. Additional duties or authority as specified by the Board of Supervisors.

6. The Commission may make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors concerning appointees to the Commission.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

- A. Each of the five (5) Supervisors may nominate four (4) voting members (hereinafter member or Commissioner), subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors. The 21st voting member shall be a member of the Board of Supervisors or designee, who is not subject to the member appointment requirements set forth below.
 1. Representation shall recognize the geographic diversity of Santa Barbara County. Supervisors may appoint members outside their supervisorial districts to meet legal requirements.
 2. Supervisors are encouraged to appoint individuals who have experience and knowledge of the Behavioral Wellness system, including both mental health and substance use disorder services.
 3. The BWC membership should reflect the ethnic diversity of the County and the client population of Santa Barbara County.
- B. BWC member appointments shall comply with the following requirements:
 1. Fifty percent (50%) or more of the total membership shall be consumers or the parents, spouses, siblings or adult children of consumers, who are receiving or have received Behavioral Wellness services. At least one of these members shall be an individual who is 25 years of age or younger. Each District shall appoint at least two consumers or family members to the BWC;
 2. At least twenty percent (20%) of the total membership shall be consumers of Behavioral Wellness services, with each District nominating at least one consumer member for appointment. At least one consumer member on the BWC shall be from the Transitional Age Youth (TAY) community (ages 18 to 26); and
 3. At least twenty percent (20%) of the total membership shall be family members of consumers of Behavioral Wellness services, with each District nominating at least one family member of consumers of behavioral health services for appointment.
 4. At least one member of the Commission shall be a veteran or veteran advocate. To comply, the County shall notify its county veterans service officer about vacancies on the Commission.

5. At least one member of the Commission shall be an employee of a local education agency. To comply, the County shall notify its county office of education about vacancies on the Commission.
6. The term of each member shall be for three (3) years, with appointments staggered over a three-year period. Initial appointments shall be made in accordance with Attachment 1.
7. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive three (3) year terms, with the exception that if a member has been appointed to a partial term of one and one half (1½) years or less, an individual may then be appointed to two (2) full three (3) year terms. When one (1) year has elapsed following a member's service, the individual is again eligible for appointment. An exception can be made if a Supervisor agrees to waive, at the request of the appointee, the one-year lapse after two (2) three-year terms.
8. Any vacancy will be filled by a new member nominated by the Supervisor from the district of the vacating member once approved by the Board of Supervisors. The nominating Supervisor can seek input from the Board of Supervisors in making the appointment. The new member will hold a position on the BWC for the remainder of the vacating member's unexpired term.
9. The members of the Commission shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for any actual expenses incurred in connection with their assigned duties as Commission members per County policies.
10. A quorum shall be one person more than one-half the number of appointed members, including the Board of Supervisors' member or his/her designee.
11. Members of the Commission shall abstain from voting on any issue in which the member has a financial interest, as defined in Section 87103 of the Government Code.
12. Consistent with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604(e)(1), no member of the Commission or the member's spouse shall be a full-time or part-time County employee of a County mental health service, an employee of the DHCS, or an employee of, or a paid member of the governing body of, a mental health contract agency. However, also consistent with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604(e)(2), a consumer of behavioral health services who has obtained employment with an employer described in the previous sentence and who holds a position in which the consumer does not have any interest, influence, or authority over any financial or contractual matter concerning the employer may be appointed to the Commission. The member shall abstain from voting on any financial or contractual issue concerning the member's employer that may come before the Commission.

13. After three (3) unexcused absences of any member during a fiscal year, the BWC Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will review reasons for absences and will, if warranted, contact the member in writing to inquire if the member wishes to remain on the BWC. Failure to respond within thirty (30) days or the continuation of absences may result in a recommendation by the BWC Chairperson that the appointing Supervisor be asked to remove and appoint a replacement member.

ARTICLE IV

MEETINGS

- A. Regular meetings shall be held at 3 pm on the third Wednesday of each month, unless cancelled, at the following location (live or video-conference):

Santa Barbara Behavioral Wellness Facility
Large Conference Room
429 N. San Antonio Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

- B. Guidelines for Commission meetings:

1. Meetings shall be noticed and conducted in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 54950) of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code (hereinafter Brown Act) relating to meetings of local agencies.
2. A special meeting may be called, consistent with the Brown Act, by the Chairperson or by a quorum of the BWC. Notice of such meeting shall conform to Government Code Section 54956.

- C. Meeting Procedures:

1. BWC regular meetings shall be conducted by the Chairperson or the Vice Chair in the Chairperson's absence.
2. The Commission shall be staffed by Behavioral Wellness. Minutes shall be recorded by a Behavioral Wellness employee, who shall serve as Program Administrator for the Commission. Agendas, minutes, and other required notices shall be posted on Behavioral Wellness' website, in a manner consistent with Government Code Section 54954.2.
3. The chairperson shall ask for introductions of the members and confirm the existence of a quorum.

4. Items identified as action items on the agenda by the Chairperson will be addressed and a vote will be taken.
5. The time allocated for public comment for each individual speaker is up to three minutes at the discretion of the Chair. No action shall be taken on any item not appearing on the agenda unless the action is otherwise authorized by law.

D. Agendas:

1. The agendas for the BWC meetings shall be established by the Chairperson.
2. Any member wishing to recommend an item for the BWC agenda shall contact the Chairperson.
3. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting shall be included on the following month's Agenda.
4. Reports from the committees may be included on the agenda.

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS

- A. The officers of the BWC shall be Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.
- B. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected at the January meeting and each shall serve a term of one year. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by a majority vote of the members of the BWC. It is recommended that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson each have at least one year of experience as a BWC member.

C. Duties:

1. The duties of the Chairperson shall include:
 - i. Call special meetings;
 - ii. Preside over meetings;
 - iii. Establish meeting agendas;

- iv. Produce and forward reports to the Board of Supervisors;
 - v. Consult with Department Director;
 - vi. Appoint Committees; and
 - vii. Appoint Nominating Committee to nominate Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson in December of each year.
2. The duties of the Vice-Chairperson shall include:
- i. Exercise all the responsibilities of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson; and
 - ii. Meet all responsibilities delegated by the Chairperson.

ARTICLE VI

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

- A. In addition to the duties listed in Article II, BWC members are expected to:
- 1. Regularly attend and participate in monthly Commission meetings. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, the member shall advise the Chairperson or Commission Program Administrator (or their representative) of the member's prospective absence.
 - 2. Annually visit at least one (1) regularly scheduled or otherwise pre-arranged site visit to an assigned contractor and report findings to the BWC.
 - 3. Participate on committees as assigned by the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson.
- B. Roles of Commissioners in engagement with the public and with Behavioral Wellness service providers:
- 1. In engaging with the public or with Behavioral Wellness providers, Commissioners are welcome to introduce themselves as serving on the Commission. Commissioners can and should listen to community concerns and seek to agendize appropriate concerns for Commission discussion.

2. Commissioners should not represent that the Commission therefore supports or opposes concerns in the community without agendizing discussion of the concern with the Commission, and without a majority vote of the Commission members in favor of taking action.
3. If engaging in a discussion where a member will express the member's views on something that has not been agendized or had Commission action taken on it in the past, Commission members must state that the views they express are their own, and do not represent the Commission's position on the matter.
4. Use of official Commission letterhead is only allowed when the Commission has agendized a matter for review, and agreed to formally respond. Such a formal response is to be drafted by the Chair or a Commissioner designated and approved by the Commission. The draft letter must be presented to the Commission as an agenda item, and approved by a vote of the majority of Commissioners.
5. No Commissioner is authorized to use official Commission letterhead to convey their opinions or concerns on any subject to entities external to the Commission without subjecting it to approval by the entire Commission in the manner described above.

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENTS

Any proposed amendment to these bylaws must be approved at a regular meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of the voting membership present at the time, provided that advance notice of the proposed amendment was given in accordance with Brown Act requirements. Should the proposed amendment be approved by the BWC members, it must be approved by the Board of Supervisors before it takes effect. In addition, the following severability clause shall pertain to these bylaws: if any part of these Bylaws are deemed unlawful, such part shall be severed from the remaining provisions, and the remainder of the Bylaws shall remain intact.

ARTICLE VIII

APPOINTING COMMITTEES

- A. The Chairperson may appoint the chair of each committee as required to further the goals of the Behavioral Wellness Commission. A committee chair must be a BWC member. It is at the committee chair's discretion to determine members of the committee. Committees may include members drawn from the community who are not BWC members.
 - 1. An Executive Committee may be established, composed of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Ex-Officio Chairperson and two or three at-large members appointed by the Chairperson to bring the number of voting members to five. This committee shall have executive functions and may act for the Commission when necessary. Any such action taken must be ratified at the next regular meeting of the Commission or become null and void.
 - 2. An ad hoc Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson at the November meeting each year, to prepare a slate of nominees for Chair and Vice Chair, to be voted on by the full Commission at the December meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the December meeting.
- B. A committee created pursuant to this Article VIII shall comply with the Brown Act to the extent such committee constitutes a legislative body under Section 54952 of the Government Code.