California Behavioral Health Planning Council
ADVOCACY • EVALUATION • INCLUSION

April 2026 Committee Meeting Highlights

Performance Outcomes Committee:

The finalized 2025 Data Notebook Overview Report on Wellness and Recovery Centers is published on the Planning Council website.

The POC is currently working on the survey for the 2026 Data Notebook. The topic for the 2026 Data Notebook is Behavioral Health Services for Foster Youth.

- They are partnering with the California Alliance of Child and Family Services for this Data Notebook.
- The committee aims to review and approve the survey at the June quarterly meeting and then distribute it to counties.

Executive Committee:

Council Oversight: The Executive Committee reviews operations and received updates on changes to the following since the January 2026 meeting:

- Council appointments
- State Budget
- FY 2025-26 allotments
- FY 2026-26 expenditures

Integration of Areas of Focus: The final document with the areas of focus for the Council for 2026 was presented. The committee discussed integrating the Council's areas of focus into the work of all committees. Areas of Focus include:

- Statewide Behavioral Health Integration
- Advocacy for Persons with Lived Experience and Stakeholder Engagement
- Patients' Rights
- Justice-Involved Populations in the Behavioral Health System
- Behavioral Health Housing

Patients' Rights Committee:

Legislation Recommendation: The PRC reviewed SB 1221, which would prioritize the placement of Murphy conservatees by the Department of State Hospitals over other LPS conservatees. The committee believes this bill will fail to improve the system since LPS conservatees already have low priority for placement and extreme wait times for State Hospitals are driven by a severe lack of beds. They voted to recommend an "oppose" position to the PC's Legislation and Public Policy Committee.

CARE Act Implementation: The committee continues to track the implementation across the state and aims to hear from a local county in June about their implementation challenges and successes.

Workforce and Employment Committee:

2026-2030 Workforce Education and Training (WET) Plan: The committee focused on providing feedback on the draft 2026-2030 WET Plan.

- The committee discussed their feedback for the Plan with the WET Steering Committee and prepared information presented to the full Council at the General Session Meeting April 17th.
- The committee plans to hold an in-between meeting to assemble formal feedback for the draft 2026-2030 WET Plan in May 2026.

Presentation: The Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) presented the core investment objectives of the 2026-2030 WET Plan.

Legislation and Public Policy Committee:

Legislative Positions Taken: The Legislation and Public Policy Committee reviews legislation and takes actions on behalf of the Council. The committee voted to **support** 7 bills**:**

- SB 936 (Blakespear): seeks to prohibit the public retail sale of nitrous oxide (laughing gas or N2O) tanks or canisters larger than a standard 8-gram, with limited exemptions for medical, dental, culinary, and automotive applications.

- AB 2003 (Berman): would require the Commission for Behavioral Health, in consultation with the California Department of Education and the California Department of Public Health, to develop a free, permanent statewide online suicide prevention training program for students ages 13 and older, K-12 school staff including teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents.

- AB 1970 (Harabedian): intends to prohibit health care services plans and insurers from requiring step therapy (“fail-first”) for prescription drugs used to treat behavioral health conditions. It would allow patients to start treatment with the medication their provider prescribes, without first having to try insurer-preferred alternatives.

- AB 2352 (Valencia): seeks to provide a technical clarification to confirm that nonprofit public benefit corporations with 501(c)(3) status that employ licensed

mental health professionals may enroll in Medi-Cal as group providers for the purpose of delivering Non-Specialty Mental Health Services.

- AB 2460 (Rodriguez, Celeste): would require the State Department of Education, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, to update the model referral protocols to include guidance on providing equity-centered mental health supports in case of a local emergency related to immigration enforcement activities or deportations of pupils or their family members.

- SB 903 (Padilla): intends to prohibit individuals or companies, including those using artificial intelligence, from offering or advertising therapy or psychotherapy in California unless a licensed professional is responsible for care.

- SCR 145 (Weber Pierson): would recognize the third week of May 2026 as Mental Health Peer Appreciation Week in California.

The committee voted to **oppose** three bills:

- SB 490 (Umberg): intends to, among other provisions, require the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to initiate investigations into complaints against alcohol or other drug recovery or treatment facilities, who allegedly do not have a current valid license, within 10 days of receiving the complaint. It would also require DHCS to complete the investigation within 60 days of initiating the investigation.
- SB 1221 (Stern): would prioritize the placement of Murphy conservatees by the Department of State Hospitals over other Lanterman-Petris-Short Act conservatees. It would also designate the public safety/victim representative to be the District Attorney, who would also participate in the commitment and placement decisions of those subject to a Murphy Conservatorship.
- AB 46 (Nguyen): seeks to remove the super strike limitation from the diversion denial standard and allows courts to deny diversion when a defendant poses a public safety risk.

Policy Recommendations: The committee voted to **support and send recommendations** to the author's office for AB 2161 (Bonta), which intends to update Medi-Cal redetermination provisions to conform to the 6-month redetermination requirement under the House of Representatives (H.R.) 1 Bill for Medicaid expansion adults. It would also expand the form delivery mechanisms to include the telephone, online, or commonly available electronic means and require counties to accept specified methods of signatures.

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Systems and Medicaid Committee:

High-Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) services: The committee focused on the policy and implementation of HFW services for children and youth.

- The SMC received an update on the High-Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) services from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).
- Representatives from the California Alliance of Child and Family Services and Sacramento County Behavioral Health Services Department presented funding and implementation considerations of the service and differentiated this service between Full-Service Partnerships.
- The committee will consult with children's system representative on the Council to monitor and track the recent release of the draft HFW Behavioral Health Information Notice and draft HFW Policy Manual.

Housing and Homelessness Committee:

Chairperson Transitions: The Committee approved **Barbara Mitchell** as the Interim Housing and Homelessness Committee (HHC) Chairperson for the remainder of 2026.

In Between Meeting Staff Activities: Committee staff reported on actions taken on behalf of the Committee.

- The Council signed onto a comment letter from the Protecting Immigrant Families Coalition opposing HUD's proposed rule that would bar mixed-immigration-status families from HUD-assisted housing—a policy that could force families to separate or risk eviction and homelessness.
- Council submitted a recommendation letter to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) regarding the BHSA Housing Policy. The letter focused on two issues: 1) Length of Stay in Interim (Transitional) Housing and 2) Income-Based Tenant Contributions **Recommendation:** Allow up to 24 months of interim housing support and permit programs to charge up to 30% of tenant income, consistent with federal practice.

Recovery Housing: The Committee continues to explore opportunities for funding under the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). During the meeting, committee members heard two presentations:



- **Hope Cooperative's Renewed Hope** is a 57-unit transitional housing program in Sacramento designed to support justice-involved adults as they transition back into the community.
- **AMI Housing's The Harbor** is a new 16-bed peer respite program in Placer County that provides a safe, supportive, home-like environment for adults who need a place to stay while waiting for residential treatment or transitioning out of inpatient care.