

**California Behavioral Health Planning Council
Legislation and Public Policy Committee
Meeting Summary**

Friday, August 4, 2023
10:00 am to 11:30 am
1700 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Dial-in: (669) 900-6833
Meeting ID: 867 8962 1249
Passcode: 012159

Members Present:

Veronica Kelley, Chairperson	Barbara Mitchell, Chair-Elect	
Deborah Starkey	Uma Zykofsky	Daphne Shaw
Karen Baylor	Susan Wilson	Steve Leoni
Monica Caffey	Noel O'Neill	Liz Oseguera
Erin Franco	Darlene Prettyman	Javier Moreno
Catherine Moore		

Meeting Commenced at 10:00 a.m.

Item #1 Discussion of SB 326 The Behavioral Services Act

Veronica Kelley, Chairperson of the Legislation and Public Policy committee, provided a brief overview of the amendments to Senate Bill (SB) 326 since the June 2023 meeting. Members of the committee were given an opportunity to discuss the amended legislation.

Uma Zykofsky expressed multiple concerns around the lack of stakeholder input, resulting in the voice of consumers and family members being reduced. She stated that stakeholders agree that there was not a sufficient stakeholder process on the front end of developing SB 326 and the language within the bill limits stakeholder input at various stages of the process. Additionally, she expressed concern around the expansion of the Mental Health Services Act Oversight and Accountability Commission and the creation of additional committees, resulting in further reduction of the consumer voice. Uma also expressed concern about the legislation including different levels of Full Service Partnerships (FSP). She feels very uncomfortable with these changes as the counties would have to manage different levels of FSPs and feels the change changes the definition of what a FSP is. Additionally, she feels having the different levels labels individuals. Lastly, Uma stated that she shared the concerns of others regarding the

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Prevention and Early Intervention bucket. She feels the design reduces the community voice and will impact racial disparities.

Barbara Mitchell expressed extreme concerns about limiting 30% of the funding to housing. Further, she feels it is extremely inappropriate for half of that funding to be reserved for individuals who are considered chronically homeless. It is extremely difficult to qualify people and prove they are chronically homeless so they can receive services. She also stated that she shares the concerns about the reduction of the consumer voice, which will result in diluting the role of consumers and family members. She also expressed concern about the loss of consumer-operated/directed services because the bucket these services would be paid through is extremely small.

Noel O'Neill expressed concern about the reduction of Community Services and Supports (CSS) funding and the impact it will have on Wellness Centers and the Peer Specialists that support the centers. Noel stated that the Wellness Centers were a critical resource in both counties where he worked and they are only supported by MHSA, not Medi-Cal.

Daphne Shaw supported Noel's comments and expressed concern about losing the Wellness Center in her county.

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Stacie Hiramoto thanked Uma for bringing up the PEI issue. She stated that REMHDCO completely agrees that the changes will not be supportive of BIPOC and LGBTQ communities, as well as other underserved communities.

Steve McNally expressed concern that sufficient details on the proposal have not been provided, so it is premature to place it on the ballot in March. He also offered to help find space if the Council is interested in hosting a listening session in Orange County.

Elan Schultz, Los Angeles County Mental Health, stated they are greatly concerned about several aspects of SB 326. Based on their analysis, they will have great challenges finding alternative funding to backfill the loss of 30% of the funding that will be directed to housing. Medi-Cal outpatient clinical services system will be greatly impacted, as it will no longer be able to be funded through MHSA due to the CSS constraints and it will be challenging to find an ongoing alternative funding stream. The county is also concerned about MHSA including individuals with SUD, with decreased funding, rather than additional funding. Lastly, the loss of local control to identify needs and match them with local resources is also very concerning.

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Theresa Comstock, CALBHB/C and the California Coalition for Mental Health (CCMH), highlighted that the amendments requested by CALBHB/C and the statement released by CCMH are both included in the meeting packet. She also stated that the state has not standardized data and does not have the information necessary to know what programs should be scaled or reduced. Additionally, the community-based organizations and counties have not been successful with braiding funding with federal resources and do not have the information needed to determine they will successfully be able to do so, as the legislation is depending on.

Item #3 Behavioral Health Services Act Public Forums Update

Jenny Bayardo, Executive Officer, and Susan Wilson, Council Member informed members that the Council will be hosting seven public forums scheduled to take place within the first two weeks of August and provided a brief update on the 2 forums that took place. The August 1st virtual forum had over two hundred individuals in attendance including individuals who identified as peers/consumers, providers, advocates, mental health service providers, and individuals from community-based organizations statewide. The August 3rd forum hosted in Stockton had thirty-two members of the public in attendance. The attendees included individuals who identified as peers/consumers, family members, providers, community leaders, County Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder employees, the MHSA Coordinator, the San Joaquin County Mental Health Board Chairperson, the County Behavioral Health Director, a County Supervisor, and concerned citizens. In the coming weeks, there will be forums in Oakland, Santa Clara, Sacramento, Bakersfield, and Los Angeles/Culver City. Council members are encouraged to attend the forums in their area and share the flyers for the events.

Item #4 Discussion of Council Recommendations

Naomi Ramirez, Council staff, reported that the Council's request for amendments and the coalition letter the Council signed on to are included in the meeting packet. Jenny Bayardo, Executive Officer, informed the committee that the amendments requested were based on the feedback the committee provided at the June meeting, which was before the bill was amended. Steve Leoni expressed a desire for the committee to meet again after the public forums to develop recommendations, but it was determined that would not be possible because letters were due the same week of the last public forum.

Noel O'Neill recommended that the Council's primary recommendation be for state agencies and the legislature to carefully review the input from the public that will be gathered at the Council's Public Forums.

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Daphne Shaw agreed with Noel's recommendation. Additionally, she recommended that the Council express the grave concern expressed by many about the loss of programs due to the reduction in CSS funding.

Javier Moreno stated that he is in support of the inclusion of SUD and is prepared to support the bill in concept with a significant number of amendments.

Liz Oseguera recommended that the Council ask the initiative to be moved from the March ballot to the November ballot. She urged members to think of creative recommendations to propose to the administration to address the loss of Community Services and Supports funding. The Recommendations should include the identification of other funding sources for housing that do not involve MHSA/BHSA. She recommended that the 30% for housing be eliminated and the funding go to CSS, Prevention and Early Intervention, and Innovations.

Vandana Pant stated that she believes the inclusion of SUD is appropriate. She recommended that the Council raise a concern about the MHSA funding being redirected and recommended that other funding sources be utilized.

Uma Zykofsky supports Vandana's statement and states her great concern is about the loss of CSS funding and the stakeholder process being diluted. She believes several amendments are critical before the committee can take a support position. She also stated that analysis of the input we receive from the public forums is important before developing a position.

Steve Leoni shared his hope that members of the Council reach out to staff in the interim to further discuss details as they emerge. He also highlighted that the Council is written into law to advise the legislature and Governor, which should give the ability to provide input beyond the deadline for letter submission.

Members came to a consensus that the committee should not take a position before reviewing the anticipated bill amendments. Staff was directed to send a letter including the Council's concerns outlined during the meeting and the feedback provided at the upcoming public forums.

Javier Moreno reminded members that there is a bond that accompanies the proposal that is supposed to address some of the housing issues, and it may offset some of the additional costs. Barbara Mitchell stated the bond can not be used for operational support of the housing developed and the population that can be housed through the bond is limited. She recommended that the Council submit comments on the bond in the future.

Daphne Shaw requested that once the Council's letter of concern for SB 326 is written and submitted, it also be sent to all LPPC members.

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No public comment.

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