

**California Behavioral Health Planning Council**  
**Housing and Homelessness Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, April 18, 2024

8:30 am to 12:00 pm

**Council Members Present:**

Arden Tucker, Erin Franco, Susie Baker, Lynne Martin del Campo, Jason Bradley, Bill Stewart, Maria Sierra, Don Morrison, Deborah Starkey, Monica Caffey, Barbara Mitchell, Daphne Shaw, Jessica Ocean, Danielle Sena, Susan Wilson, Sarah Poss, John Black (virtual)

**Staff Present:**

Jenny Bayardo, Gabriella Sedano, Simon Vue

**Meeting Commenced at 8:30 a.m.**

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**Item #1      Approval of January 2024 Meeting Minutes**

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The Housing and Homelessness Committee (HHC) reviewed the January 2024 Draft Meeting Minutes. The minutes were accepted by the committee with no edits.

**Action/Resolution**

The January 2024 HHC Meeting Minutes are approved and will be posted to the CBHPC website.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Simon Vue – April 2024

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**Item #2      CBHPC Workgroup Updates**

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Jenny Bayardo shared that the Reducing Disparities Work Group (RDW) has developed a list of potential questions on disparities for guest speakers. RDW has submitted this list to the Executive Committee for feedback and review. Jenny requested that at least one member from HHC participate in the workgroup and provide an update in the next meeting. Bill Stewart reported that Children and Youth Work Group (CYW) viewed a segment of the PBS documentary, *Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness*. This short film features first-person accounts from youth living with mental health conditions. Monica Caffey announced that CYW plans to create a forum where young people can share their experiences with the Planning Council, and work together to establish priorities for youth wellbeing. Bill added that CYW is determining the most suitable times for the next quarterly meeting to ensure youth participation.

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**Item #3      Senate Constitutional Amendment 2 (SCA 2) Ballot Measure to Repeal Article 34**

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Jordan Panana Carbajal, Legislative Advocate from California Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY), presented on SCA 2. This measure aims to repeal Article 34 of the California Constitution, which requires public approval for low-rent housing projects funded by taxpayer dollars. Jordan stated that Article 34 perpetuates racial and economic disparities by enabling wealthy communities to veto racial integration. They do this by approving affordable housing projects only in undesirable neighborhoods. Furthermore, Article 34 exacerbates California's severe housing and homelessness crisis by restricting the construction of affordable housing. SCA 2 passed the State Senate with a vote of 37-0 on January 26, 2022, and the State Assembly with a vote of 73-0 on August 31, 2022. The measure will appear on the November ballot in 2024. If voters approve SCA 2, it will empower local governments to address the issues of low-income housing and homelessness. This would lead to more equitable communities, an increased rate of affordable housing construction, and taxpayer-dollar savings.

Q&A:

Susie Baker asked if any group had publicly opposed SCA 2. Jordan indicated that no group had publicly announced opposition or voiced against SCA 2 during its time in the Legislature, where it was unanimously passed in both chambers.

Arden raised a question about the problem of gentrification and its effect on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Jordan replied that one of California YIMBY's core values is that children who grow up in a neighborhood should have the opportunity to remain and flourish in that same area. He shared that California YIMBY backs legislation addressing gentrification and has conducted studies and research on gentrification issues and the impact of affordable housing. Barbara requested that Jordan share their studies, as up-to-date research materials are beneficial. Having led a nonprofit organization for years where endorsing specific candidates was not allowed, Barbara queried how California YIMBY could do so.

Jordan explained that California YIMBY is a registered 501(c)(3) and (c)(4) nonprofit. Jason Bradley brought up Senate Bill (SB) 469 (Allen), signed by Governor Newsom on September 8, 2023, which aims to reform Article 34 by stipulating that the use of state affordable-housing funds does not necessitate voter approval under Article 34. If SCA 2 fails to repeal Article 34, Jason suggested that the group monitor SB 469 and collaborate on building more exclusions.

Don Morrison asked about the Governor's position on SCA 2. Jordan responded that his group has not received any communication from the Governor's Office.

**Action/Resolution**

HHC staff to email Jordan with a request for their research materials and studies to share with HHC members.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Simon Vue - Ongoing

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**Item #4      Public Comment**

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No public comment.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #5      Hope Cooperative Presentation**

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Marlyn Sepulveda, Chief Operating Officer, and Linda Bratcher, Care Coordinator, from Hope Cooperative, presented on permanent supportive housing (PSH). Maryln shared that PSH is not a shelter, but a permanent home for individuals and families. It caters to those experiencing homelessness, possibly coupled with chronic health issues, disabilities, or other severe challenges. PSH merges the stability of a permanent home with tailored services to help residents live independently within the community.

Hope Cooperative embraces a Housing First approach, which prioritizes transitioning individuals from homelessness to permanent housing as quickly as possible, without any preconditions. Marlyn mentioned that Housing First is successful nationwide and has a 90 percent success rate at Hope Cooperative in Sacramento.

Marlyn shared that in Sacramento, people primarily access PSH in two ways:

- 1) Sacramento is moving to a Coordinated Access System that matches homeless individuals and families with housing and services that best suit their needs.
  - a. Standardized Access
  - b. Assessment
  - c. Prioritization
  - d. Resource Allocation
  - e. Data Integration
  - f. Community Collaboration
  - g. Transparency and Fairness
- 2) The Sacramento County Behavioral Health Department is adding 15-30 housing units for behavioral health services.

Successful PSH requires strong collaboration between property management, residential services, and case management services to provide wrap-around support.

Marlyn suggested that affordable housing is a solution to homelessness. Project Homekey is a significant initiative aimed at reducing homelessness. It goes beyond housing to provide residents with healthcare, social services, and other support to ensure long-term stability and community integration. Linda gave a brief overview of their Hope Housing Program – La Mancha, a Mercy Housing Homekey Project that

provides comprehensive services to 60 individuals in PSH. This project has been commended by the Governor as a successful effort to tackle homelessness.

#### Q&A:

Susie Baker shared that a significant hurdle for homeless individuals in her county is the challenge of accessing programs and services without documentation. She queried how Hope Cooperative tackles this problem. Maryln acknowledged these barriers as commonplace but mentioned ongoing initiatives aiming to address them. Linda noted that staff can upload necessary documents into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), eliminating the need for individuals to visit the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for document retrieval.

Bill Stewart sought clarification regarding the sponsor bringing 15-30 units to Sacramento County. Maryln explained it as a pilot project of 15 units, focusing on transitioning people from shelters to housing. Erin Franco asked about the occupancy rate of Hope Cooperative's projects. Maryln stated that it is approximately 99 percent. Erin further inquired if they monitor the total number of units needed and how many they currently meet with their projects. Maryln, uncertain of the precise numbers, estimated around 9,000 people are homeless in Sacramento. They have about 500 housing units in the pipeline and are continually seeking additional opportunities.

Erin inquired if the reported data is stored for a county. Jason replied that the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) maintains a statewide dashboard that displays the number of housing units needed and the income variations across different geographic areas. Jason further stated that, according to their statewide plan, there's a demand for 2.5 million housing units over the next ten years.

Jason Bradley questioned the types of vouchers Hope Cooperative provides. Maryln described that HUD released similar-to-Section 8 vouchers in the 1990s, which they applied for. These are used for their Full-Service Partnership, which is a high-intensity mental health program for chronically homeless people. She added that they also have project-based vouchers tied to the HUD housing project. These vouchers are not transferable; if an individual moves, they cannot take the voucher with them. Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) issued what they call "move on" vouchers to assist long-term residents of these projects.

#### **Action/Resolution**

N/A

#### **Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #6      Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
(SAMHSA) Update**

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Hal Zawacki, M.P.H., M.S.W., Assistant Regional Director, Region IX from SAMHSA, provided an update on the homeless data he discussed at the January Meeting. He also outlined SAMHSA's efforts to address disparities through program activities.

According to HUD's 2023 Point-in-Time Report, over 650,000 people were experiencing homelessness, marking a 12 percent increase nationwide. HUD's report indicates that about 25 percent of adults experiencing homelessness in the US reported severe mental illness, with about 20 percent having a substance use disorder (SUD). However, Hal noted that HUD's data slightly differs from the "All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness" Report by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). According to USICH's report, approximately 25 percent of people experiencing homelessness have a severe mental illness, and about 35 percent have SUDs. Hal shared that these rates tend to be higher amongst people living unsheltered or those with disabilities.

Hal emphasized that behavioral health is not the primary cause of homelessness. Factors contributing to the rise in homelessness include a shortage of affordable housing, high living costs, racial and ethnic disparities, inadequate safety nets, and more. He also shared that housing instability and homelessness lead to increased risk of substance abuse, serious mental illness, and trauma and violence.

Hal mentioned a study by the University of California, San Francisco that found Black or African Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. Additionally, HUD's Point in Time report showed that Hispanic Latinos had the largest numerical increase in homelessness.

SAMHSA, primarily a grant-making agency, uses various strategies to address some of the disparities that are out there. Almost half of the \$621 million that SAMHSA provided to California in 2023 came as block grants, providing the state with flexibility in deciding how to use these funds. The state relies on advocacy groups to determine how to allocate this money. Hal shared that grant-making agencies develop specific strategies to target disadvantaged groups or populations including:

- 1) Targeting specific racial/ethnic groups
- 2) Targeting specific disadvantaged communities
- 3) Targeting specific populations through directed funding/set-asides
- 4) Disparity Impact Statements and Reviews

Hal added that even if a grantee targets a disadvantaged community, their impact might be limited if their services are not culturally and linguistically appropriate. Disparity impact statements should show how the grantee will provide responsive services.

Hal provided an overview of HUD's and HHS's Housing and Services Partnership Accelerator Initiative. This initiative provides selected states with technical assistance to develop or expand housing-related support and services for Medicaid-eligible people with disabilities and older adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. States were required to form collaborative teams from their health, housing, and aging and disability sectors, and outline their implementation status of Medicaid-covered housing support and services, their goals under the Accelerator, and areas requiring technical assistance.

#### Q&A:

Erin asked if there is a place where SAMHSA keeps the data in terms of geographical areas and populations. Hal responded that they do a lot of studies every year where the data can be broken down by states but believes cannot be broken down by counties yet. Hal also added that, because the community health center program does require a lot of geographic analysis as part of the grant application process, they fund a contractor who provides a lot of disparities data that is available on the web for the general population.

Monica shared that, at the previous meeting, Hal mentioned there was an office at SAMHSA for the racial and ethnic programs. Monica asked if Hal had any updates regarding how they are addressing the data regarding disparities. Hal responded that it was the Office of Behavioral Health Equity. Previously, most grant programs were kind of generic and they said the money was to be used for behavioral health services and lots of different groups of people could apply. But how do you track and ensure that money is going towards addressing disparities? SAMHSA's Office of Behavioral Health Equity has increased its staff by 400 percent to come up with a concept of these disparity impact statements and use them to try to guide grantees. However, there are not a lot of teeth in it because the grantees are already funded. SAMHSA uses these statements to guide them to address those disparities.

Jason asked who the lead agency in California is regarding the Housing and Service Partnership Accelerator Program. The lead agency is the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). The core team includes the Department of Aging, Department of Rehabilitation, Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency, then Housing Choice Voucher (HCV). The reason these agencies are involved is because the focus is on bridging health housing, specifically for aging Californians and those with disabilities.

#### **Action/Resolution**

N/A

#### **Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #7      Public Comment**

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A member of the public shared that many for-profit organizations are becoming limited liability companies (LLCs), which are not required to disclose any information. The question was how SAMHSA tracks public dollars, especially when dealing with LLCs that may not provide information. In response, Hal explained that there is a reporting process for all spent dollars. Every federal grant is subject to the “Government Performance and Results Act” (GPRA), which requires grantees to report the services they provide, their beneficiaries, and how they use the grant. Therefore, even if a grantee subcontracts with a for-profit organization, they are still required to report if they receive public dollars.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #8      2024 Adult Residential Care Facilities “ARCF” Bill**

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Theresa Comstock, Executive Director of the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards (CALBHB/C), provided a presentation on Senate Bill 1082 (Eggman). This bill proposes the creation of an Augmented Residential Care Facility (ARCFs), a new type of facility designed to provide 24-hour nonmedical care for up to six adults with serious mental illness. This bill would require ARCFs to be licensed by the Department of Social Services (CDSS) and certified by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

There is a pressing need in California for small, homelike, community-based residential care facilities for individuals with serious mental illness who are unable to live independently. Theresa highlighted three key challenges:

- 1) **Financial:** Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs) cannot sustain themselves on a small scale without substantial subsidies.
- 2) **Staffing:** Recruiting and retaining a professional, trained, and experienced staff requires proper management, appropriate salaries, and ongoing training.
- 3) **“Not In My Backyard:”** Communities often oppose the construction of new facilities or attempts to rezone properties for ARFs.

**Q&A:**

Erin cited the Orange County Wellness Center as an example of a facility doing excellent work but noted that it serves a mixed population of Intellectual and Development Disabilities (IDDs) individuals with those with mental health conditions. These two groups have different service needs, yet they are being served under one block. Erin expressed concerns about the effectiveness of this approach statewide and suggested tailoring services to the specific needs of different populations.

Barbara Mitchell shared that CBHPC's Legislative Committee supports SB 1082 in concept but wants to continue collaborating with the bill's author and the association on various provisions. Barbara shared concerns about the feasibility for small providers to meet the certification requirements for ARCFs, given the need for additional staffing and services. She added that the Legislative Committee prefers a more inclusive approach for people not in not in ARCFs. Barbara also mentioned that the bill does not adequately address the funding mechanism.

Theresa responded that behavioral health agencies do provide patches to board and care facilities, generally those with 45 beds or larger. These patches can range up to around \$225 per day per individual. However, that funding is not matched with Medi-Cal. Theresa added that the tiered structure for IDD, which does receive some Medi-Cal matching, could be a potential source of funding.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #9      Public Comment**

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Ted: Audio Incomprehensible\*

Bill asked how to create an action item for HHC to decide whether to support SB 1082. Barbara Mitchell replied that the Legislative Committee had already listed the bill as an action item and had voted on it.

Barbara Wilson, a member of the public, shared that the process of getting into a licensed board and care facility can be onerous. She mentioned that the website does not specify whether licensed board and care homes serve those connected with regional centers or those who are not. In Los Angeles County, facilities that collaborate with the regional center have exclusive use. Therefore, unless you are already a regional center client, you cannot access these facilities.

Furthermore, Barbara stated that to access a licensed facility using Enriched Residential Care (ERC) funding, you must already have an open case with the County Department of Mental Health. Without this, you are not eligible. Consequently, individuals coming from home who have never been in a board and care home probably do not have an open case with the County. Opening a case can take a significant amount of time.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #10      UPDATE: Letter to SAMHSA RE: Definition of Chronic Homelessness**

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During the HHC January 2024 Meeting with Mr. Zawacki, the group discussed a critical issue concerning the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) eligibility criteria for chronic homelessness. As an action item, HHC submitted a letter to SAMHSA urging that HUD and other federal agencies consider amending the federal definition of chronic homelessness to reflect that of California's definition.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #11      Committee Workplan Review**

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There was not enough time to discuss this agenda item.

**Action/Resolution**

Move this agenda item to the June 2024 agenda.

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

Simon Vue – ongoing

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**Item #12      Public Comment**

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No public comment.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A

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**Item #13      Wrap-up Next Steps**

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There was not enough time to discuss this agenda item.

**Action/Resolution**

N/A

**Responsible for Action-Due Date**

N/A