

CBHPC Executive Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2025

Committee Members Present:

Erika Cristo*	Noel O'Neill
Elissa Feld	Deborah Pitts
Richard Krzyzanowski*	Maria Sierra
Mike Phillips	Deborah Starkey
Susan Wilson	Bill Stewart
Daphne Shaw	Arden Tucker
Barbara Mitchell	Tony Vartan
Javier Moreno	Uma Zykofsky
Don Morrison	

*=Remote Attendance

Committee Members Absent at the start of the meeting: Karen Baylor

Staff Present: Jenny Bayardo and Naomi Ramirez

Welcome and Introductions

Chairperson Tony Vartan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Council Members and attendees introduced themselves. A quorum was established with 17 of 18 members present at the start of the meeting.

January, April, and June 2025 Meeting Minutes (Action)

Chairperson Susan Wilson allowed committee members to review minutes. There were no edits requested. There was no public comment on the minutes. January, April, and June minutes were accepted as written.

Council Membership Update

Naomi Ramirez reviewed the Council Member appointment list provided in the meeting packet, identifying separations and new appointments. Naomi shared that Susan Demoise, the new Department of Aging representative, will send designees to committee meetings and General Session.

Currently, there are two Family Member vacancies and two Persons with Lived Experience vacancies. The officer team recently conducted interviews in partnership with DHCS. Several applicants plan to attend the October meeting.

Expenditure Reports & Allotments Update

Chief of Operations Naomi Ramirez updated the committee and reviewed the enclosed expenditure report and allotments for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. The Council successfully achieved the reduction needed by all state departments for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Naomi shared that the reduction in MHPA funds remains for the new allotment.

Javier Moreno asked for clarification on the reduction in funding. Naomi Ramirez stated that the Council had to reduce the MHPA spending by \$249,000. She added that many departments at the Department of Health Care Services did not achieve the cost savings required, which is what caused a delay in the current year's allotments. Jenny Bayardo added that the reduction was a result of the Governor's order for all departments to reduce expenses by 15 percent. Susan Wilson confirmed that 15% was out of the State Fund only.

Uma Zyckofsky asked the Executive Officer, Jenny Bayardo, to speak to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration funding. Jenny Bayardo stated there are no cuts to the Council's Mental Health Block Grant funds and no cuts to the state's funding at this time. Erika Cristo confirmed that as of today, this remains true.

Council Annual Vision and Focus

Chairperson Tony Vartan led the committee in a discussion about the Annual Vision and focus presented in Tab 4 of the meeting packet to the Executive Committee. The Officer Team created this document to focus committee work on priority areas. This document will also guide General Session Agenda topics.

Tony Vartan reviewed the four proposed categories, then asked for committee input. The committee thoroughly reviewed and discussed the proposal. Council staff took notes and will modify the document to include the requested edits and additions. Some items discussed included:

- Support for the Justice-Involved Category
 - Add: 300 Dependents Support and 602 Ward Support (Noel O'Neill).
 - Add: Proposition 36 (Javier Moreno).
- Consider emphasis on the Impact of Federal Changes and potential regulations modifications needed as a result of federal actions (Barbara Mitchell).
- Elaborate on the first bullet: Impact on program and funding, for example, the Managed Care Plans and Behavioral Health side have to share certain programs. There is a need to understand the rebalancing of the Behavioral Health Services Act and address the profound integration of Managed Care Plans and Behavioral Health (Uma Zyckofsky).
- Add a bullet to point out the education of the Council on SUD and Integration (Javier Moreno). Supported by Susan Wilson.
- We need to address older adults and children and not exclusively focus on Substance Use Disorder (Tony Vartan).
- Advocate for Medi-Cal funding due to HR 1 reductions (Javier Moreno).

- Add Wellness Coaches under Peer Support (Maria Sierra).
- Consider adding SAMHSA priorities to the integration section of the document (Uma Zykofsky).
- Patient's Rights and the trend to increase institutionalization need to be highlighted (Daphne Shaw).

Arden Tucker asked specifically about older adults. Tony Vartan shared that that level in detail will be covered by committees under the areas of focus. Susan Wilson stated that committees will do the work, and what is not addressed by the committees will be addressed during the General Session. Jenny Bayardo reviewed the background information and highlighted the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service (SAMHSA) priorities document for the committee's discussion. Elisa Fields stated that we need to account for the Federal priorities in the work of the Council. Elisa thanked Jenny Bayardo for bringing this to the attention of the Council. Barbara Mitchell requested that we share the SAMHSA strategic priorities with the entire Council. Barbara also suggested we address this at General Session in January. Tony stated that the information will be shared with all Council Members, and we will discuss further in January 2026.

Tony Vartan called for public comment before the vote. Janet Frank from the Commission on Aging thanked the Council for prioritizing older adults. She also stated the Commission should consider a process similar to the one the Council has, and could learn a lot from the Council, in particular, by tying the work of committees back to priorities.

Motion: Tony Vartan made a motion to approve the proposed areas of focus, incorporating the items outlined during the discussion. The motion was seconded by Uma Zykofsky. Deborah Pitts abstained. The motion passed.

Workgroup Discussion (Action)

Jenny Bayardo provided the Committee with an overview of the existing workgroups and the history of how they came about. Workgroups were intended to be focused and time-limited. Jenny Bayardo shared the document included in the meeting packet, created by Council Staff, to clarify and define the roles of the workgroups.

Tony Vartan led the committee in a discussion about the current ad hoc committee and work groups. There is concern that these groups could grow large enough to form a quorum of the Council, potentially violating Bagley-Keene. The workgroups must be aligned with state and federal mandates, as well as the Council's priorities. Committee members agreed that the purpose of these groups and the need for them to meet needs to be re-evaluated. Some groups may need to refocus; for example, the Reducing Disparities Workgroup could focus on prevention in the Behavioral Health Services Act. It was also agreed that the workgroups should not have presentations. The Executive Committee and Officer Team will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of and need for

the workgroups. Daphne Shaw suggested that we review the committees to determine if they are still relevant. Mike Phillips shared that he hopes we meaningfully incorporate the work of the workgroups into the conversations of the committees and full Council, Tony agreed. Liz Oseguera stated the workgroups should continue as they create space and intentionality that does not exist in our current committee and General Session structure. The workgroups may need to be refocused but not eliminated. Tony Vartan thanked Liz for her comments and re stated the work needs to go through the Council.

Report from CBHPC Workgroups

Workgroup reports were deferred to General Session.

Report from CA Coalition for Behavioral Health

There was no report due to changes in agenda. Tis report was deferred to General Session at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Report from CA Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards (CALBHB/C)

Executive Director Theresa Comstock reported that not as many CALBHB/C board members will be in attendance since the Council is not paying for the meeting space this year. The regions that attend Council meetings will change; for example, the superior region will be invited to the Council's April meeting. CALBHB/C has been providing support around the Community Planning Process in the Integrated Plans. Theresa shared that the Brown Act has some teleconference changes that allow members to vote remotely without disclosing their address.

General Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Wrap-Up and Plan for Next Meeting

The next meeting is on January 21, in San Diego, California.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.