

California Behavioral Health Planning Council
Patients' Rights Committee
October 15, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Mike Phillips, Chairperson
Catherine Moore
Susan Wilson

Richard Krzyzanowski, Chair-Elect
Daphne Shaw
Uma Zykofsky

Council Staff Present:

Naomi Ramirez
Justin Boese

Item #1: Welcome and Introductions

The committee meeting began at 10:30 a.m.

Mike Phillips welcomed all Patients' Rights Committee (PRC) members and guests. Committee members, staff, and guests introduced themselves. A quorum was established with 6 of 6 members.

Item #2: Review Meeting Minutes

The committee reviewed and accepted the June 2025 Meeting Minutes. No edits to the minutes were requested.

Item #3: Charter and Workplan Development

Mike Phillips informed the committee about a discussion of council priorities in the Executive Committee Meeting. He shared some suggested areas of priority for the Patients' Rights Committee, which included:

- Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (LPS) reform
- Voluntary vs. involuntary treatment
- Addressing patient's rights advocate (PRA) staffing shortages
- Engaging local county behavioral health boards/commissions on issues affecting patients' rights advocates

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Mike then initiated a committee discussion on which priority areas members want the next committee work plan to focus on.

Uma Zykofsky expressed support for the prioritization of engagement with local behavioral health boards and commissions in the work plan. Susan Wilson agreed and suggested that the committee provide general training on patients' rights advocacy to members of the California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions. She said this could encourage the boards to have a more active role in patients' rights in county programs and facilities.

Daphne Shaw referenced the report on patients' rights advocate staffing ratios prepared by the Legislative Analyst's Office at the request of former State Senator Susan Eggman. The Legislative Analyst's Office has stated that the report will not be published on their website unless there is demonstrated interest from other legislators. Catherine Moore supported the idea of engaging legislators on the issue of patients' rights advocate staffing and encouraging them to request the publication of the report.

Susan Wilson suggested that the committee should prioritize responsiveness on legislation affecting patients' rights in California, such as sending letters of support or opposition. Mike agreed but noted that it can be challenging to respond quickly enough. The committee discussed this further and decided to prioritize faster responses to relevant legislation with the help of Council staff.

Richard Kryzanowski said that he would like the committee to prioritize the inclusion of substance use disorder treatment in the work plan. He suggested that the committee work on something systematic in nature, such as best practices for patients' rights and substance use disorder treatment.

Item #4: Discussion on Executive Order Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets

The committee discussed the topic of the executive order 'Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets.' Daphne Shaw voiced concerns that this was an effort to effectively undo the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act and push involuntary treatment methods. The committee does not have any specific action planned on this item at this time but will continue to track the impact the executive order has on patients' rights in California.

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Item #5: Patients' Rights in Substance Use Disorder Treatment Facilities

Melissa Hall and Topher Tailler from the Jewish Family Service of San Diego Patient Advocacy Program presented to the committee on patients' rights advocacy services in substance use disorder treatment facilities. Their program began to work with substance use disorder facilities in 2018, when San Diego County opted into the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System. They have a sub-team of five advocates that work in 24 treatment facilities to conduct training for staff and clients, perform visits, and investigate grievances and appeals.

Melissa and Topher described some of the unique issues that come up in substance use disorder facilities. One such challenge is that clients and providers are used to an informal treatment model that was not heavily regulated and could be determined by program management, as opposed to more strict requirements in facilities where Medi-Cal regulations have been in place for longer. This has led to a need for ongoing education and effective communication with providers and staff.

They went on to describe the grievances and appeals process for clients in substance use disorder facilities. In fiscal year 2024-2025, their office received 580 complaints regarding substance use disorder facilities and assisted clients with over 1,000 issues. They said most issues are resolved at a low level outside of the grievance and appeal process. All client concerns are recorded and tracked by the advocacy team. Some common outcomes of grievance and appeal investigations are training for staff members, policy and procedure updates, or a plan of correction.

A specific issue that has been difficult is how substance use disorder treatment facilities discharge patients. Melissa and Topher described that previously, these facilities were able to discharge people for any reason, without notice. They were also able to deny admission to individuals for any reason. Under the Medi-Cal regulations, this is no longer the case. Other examples of serious issues are poor care coordination, medication mismanagement, confidentiality breaches. Facility issues like mold, high temperatures, or sanitation issues also come up. The advocacy team addresses all of these issues and more on behalf of patients.

Melissa and Topher concluded the presentation by sharing examples of their successes. One example was a client who won \$1500 in small court claims after a facility refused to reimburse them for personal belongings that were wrongfully thrown own. Another is that their advocacy for clients who are appealing their discharges from facilities has allowed several clients to avoid returning to prison for not completely court-mandated treatment. Lastly, their advocacy has led to the county adding guidance on

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services and support animals to their provider handbook, which has allowed more clients to have their animals with them during treatment. Melissa and Topher said that many providers now reach out to their program seeking recommendations on best practices and asking for advice on how they can protect residents' rights.

Item #6: Planning for Future Meetings/Activities

Mike Phillips and other members identified some next steps and agenda items for the October 2025 meeting. These next steps include:

- Committee leadership and staff will decide what to include in the Patients' Rights Committee section of the year-end report.
- Continue work on the committee charter and work plan.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.