



# Merced County Mental Health Board Meeting

January 6, 2015

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

1137 B Street, Merced, CA

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| <b>Present:</b>        | Richard Hawthorne, Chair; Iris Mojica de Tatum, Vice-Chair; Vince Ramos, Secretary; Mary Ellis; Sally Ragonut; James Fuller; Keng Cha; Kim Carter; Supervisor Walsh |
| <b>Absent:</b>         | David Baker; Cora Gonzales; Mary Hofmann  |
| <b>Others Present:</b> | Yvonna Brown; Curt Willems; Chris Kraushar, PRA; Jan Morita; Sharon Mendonca; Kurt Craig; Jeanette Merchant; Alise Soto; John; Mark; Carol Hulsizer, Recorder       |

## MINUTES

### I. Call to Order / Flag Salute / Roll Call

Richard Hawthorne, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. The flag salute was done. Roll call was taken.

### II. Mission Statement

Richard read the Mission Statement.

### III. Approval of Minutes from November 4, 2014 (BOARD ACTION)

**Action/Recommendation:** M/S/C (Ellis / Mojica de Tatum) to approve the minutes from December 2, 2014.

### IV. Opportunity for public input. At this time any person may comment on any item which is not on the agenda.

**Discussion/Conclusion:** Jan – she gave an update on upcoming NAMI classes. She passed out copies of all the different upcoming trainings. If anyone needs extra copies or additional information, just contact Jan. Jan also talked about an upcoming event that may happen around March. High school students throughout California have been asked to create videos about mental illness. Some students in Livingston won awards for their creation. NAMI has the opportunity to show about three of these videos, bringing those who created them along with their school administrator, and have them explain where they got their idea. The event is going to be called: *Directing Change*. Jan asked that everyone look for this and make a note that it is coming up. They were able to do this through a small grant from CalMHSA. They did something similar last spring when they showed, *Call Me Crazy*. Jan continued that NAMI is run strictly by volunteers but anyone can join NAMI for \$35/year which helps support their work; she passed out forms for anyone who would like to join.

Vince brought up the regional County Mental Health meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>; he wanted to know if the County would be providing transportation for the meeting. Sally reminded everyone that this was discussed at the December meeting and it was decided that it is a long drive to Bakersfield and most decided not to attend.

Alise stated that she was attending this meeting because she has been trying to be a part of the Wellness Center. She was a member at one time when she was going through some personal issues and seeking help. Because she chose alternative treatments, like spiritual healing, and continued her education, she was removed from the Wellness Center because she was part of outpatient care. The Wellness Center is part of the MHSA and part of the community and support was to have integrated, alternative treatments; but she was not allowed to go back in even though she had Medicare and Medi-Cal. She feels it is a disservice to the funding of these services. John was also present and he has been attending the Wellness Center; he explained his circumstances. Alise continued that another barrier is the lack of funding for programs that consumers want. The Wellness Center is also defeated because of the staff – it is more staff driven, rather than consumer driven. She has seen many of the reports on how many are attending the Wellness Center and she has been told that only 7 to 10 clients are in there daily. Jeanette suggested that Alise file a grievance form; John stated that he has done this several times but everything goes to a certain person at the Wellness Center and he thinks she is the main problem. Richard asked Alise what it is that she would like this Board to do. Alise stated that her input is the policy development for the Wellness Center. There are high functioning people with mental illness who want to break the stigma and want the services. Many people are slipping through the cracks and that is why the homeless count has increased. If there is an open policy to people who are declared disabled, these people can help break the stigma; it is a disservice that these people cannot get in the Wellness Center -

**IV. Opportunity for public input. At this time any person may comment on any item which is not on the agenda. – con't.**

this is contradictory to everything the MHSA stands for. The Director stated that one agenda item today is the Wellness Center and seeing how the Department can better serve the clients. But there are areas in which the Department is limited as a mental health agency. Yvonnia asked Alise to give her name and number to Jeanette and let Jeanette know what specific things Alise wants to see that would be beneficial to the Wellness Center because the Department is looking at how to better structure the Wellness Center.

Kim informed everyone that AB 59 – Assisted Outpatient Treatment – was introduced December 9<sup>th</sup>. This is Laura's Law. This would be overall for the State and we would not have to worry about it by County. This was introduced earlier but Darrel Steinberg squashed it. Kim will follow this. Kim continued that they have done an audit of MHSA and the Oversight and Accountability Commission have been using \$23 million for their own use. She is surprised that the CALMHB/C has not seen this. They asked for another \$1 million for evaluation but it was used for their own programs. Kim will do more research on this and bring back what she finds.

Vince talked about a previous Director making sure that grievance forms were out there for clients to use. Vince passed around copies of pictures from the Wellness Center and the clients that have attended in the past.

*Recommendation/Action:* As noted above

**V. Quarterly Mental Health Board Financial Report - Sharon Mendonca**

*Discussion/Conclusion:* Copies of the quarterly budget report were passed around. Sharon went over the report with the Board.

*Recommendation/Action:* Information only

**VI. Chair's Reports  
a. Update on Blending of Boards**

*Discussion/Conclusion:* a. Richard stated that he and Yvonnia met with County Counsel two weeks ago regarding the draft revision of the by-laws. County Counsel has reviewed the by-laws and is working on some changes. Once there is an agreement on the final draft of the by-laws, the question is 'when can they make the change'. County Counsel is researching this but didn't feel we had to wait until June to make the change. As soon as we complete the by-laws process, we can prepare a staff report and go to the BOS and ask for the blending of the two Boards. County Counsel had two questions. One was that County Counsel wanted to make some revisions to the two Boards and our accountability and finance report. They were slight changes but County Counsel wanted to make them more clear and specific. The other question was a change in the by-laws in regards to a leave of absence; County Counsel wants to do some research on this to see if it is allowable pursuant to the Calif. code. County Counsel wanted to know why we wanted that to happen and Richard explained to him that there was a member on the AOD Board that needed some time away and he was a valuable Board member and they did not want to lose him. Based on by-laws you could only miss so many meetings before being removed from the Board. Yvonnia continued that the last email she received during the holidays was that there was not much to change. The only question was how to phase in the AOD Board members that are statutory required. These Board members cannot be considered voting Board members; they will have to be part of the sub-committees. Once Yvonnia is given the okay, the next step will be to go to the CEO with an update and then present it to the BOS. The AOD Board is not a mandatory board and the Mental Health Board is statutory; many of the things that can be done for Mental Health, AOD will have to fall in line. County Counsel wants to make sure that we are not operating outside of our scope of practice as a board.

Sally questioned if the Mental Health Dept. will be changing their name to a Behavioral Health Center. Yvonnia responded that will be Phase 2 of the process. The first phase is to get the two Boards consolidated. Yvonnia will then present a proposal to the CEO, and eventually the BOS. The Department has a workgroup that has been working on the integration. Phase 2 will be the name change. Phase 3 will be the complete conversion and that will be a long process – to integrate and change job descriptions. Phase 1 and 2 could happen this year. Sally questioned how many counties in California have actually reached "Phase 3". Richard stated that in his research there are four counties that have completed the change. Many counties may call themselves a Behavioral Health county, but still have separate MH and AOD Boards. Yvonnia continued that based on the State perspective, we are considered a Behavioral Health Agency because we do both mental health and AOD. Curt stated that Merced County is considered, according to the State, as a Behavioral Health Program because there is one Director who oversees both AOD and Mental Health.

Sally commented that when the two Boards have been blended, that there be a training for the Mental Health Board because she, herself, is not aware of what is going on in AOD. Vince commented that a tour of the AOD side might be helpful also. Yvonnia commented that a training for both Mental Health and AOD as well as a retreat for both would help bring all parties together prior to the actual implementation.

**VI. Chair’s Reports – con’t.**

John commented that the Wellness Center is always taking surveys and they should be going out into the different areas and advocate rather than having consumers fill out surveys all the time. Vince clarified that what John meant is that the Wellness Center continues giving surveys to the same people – duplicating surveys. The EQRO also caught onto this – everyone who filled out a survey only had good things to say; where were the negative comments? Nobody (Wellness Center) can be that good. Yvonnia commented that if there is a concern about the surveys, this can be looked into and researched.

*Recommendation/Action:* As noted above

**VII. Supervisor’s Report**

*Discussion/Conclusion:* Supervisor Walsh had nothing to report.

*Recommendation/Action:* None

**VIII. Director’s Report**

- a. Follow-up on Wellness Center Discussion
- b. New Projects
  - i. Mobile Crisis Unit
  - ii. Centralized Intake
  - iii. Operational Department Assessment
- c. EQRO Audit Review
- d. FY 15/16 Update

*Discussion/Conclusion:* a. Yvonnia commented that after last month’s discussion on the Wellness Center a workgroup was formed to put a plan together and making sure that concerns, such as Alise’s comments today, are addressed. She did not want to present something that was not complete in addressing the concerns raised. She asked that Curt give a brief report. Curt stated that they are looking at what was done in the past, what the current practices are, and trying to decide what is the best use. Alise brought up some good points regarding access and service - what fits into the criteria of mental health and making sure that the Dept. is setting up policies that appropriately address the issues at the Wellness Center and the funding for it. They are looking at who currently attends, who has expressed recent interest, who has been in there in the past and come up with a better perspective of a target population. They want to set good boundaries and limits and at the same time does not create barriers. Hopefully, they will have something more concrete next time. Yvonnia emphasized that her responsibility to the group is to make sure they don’t lose the core focus of why there is a Wellness Center and that the population that is mandated to be served is priority. She is open to see how we can infuse other individuals outside of Mental Health, but still have to capture them; there is a certain criteria that still has to be met. The Department wants to make sure that it is clearly defined. She wants to bring back a document that is well thought out. It will not fit every scenario, but it will address as many concerns as possible in better incorporating other individuals, if they meet a certain criteria. The Wellness Center cannot be opened up to everybody in the County. Vince questioned how the boundaries will be set. Yvonnia responded that there are certain core items that the Dept. is mandated to serve – the SMI population and the MHSA Plan. The clients have to fit the SMI criteria whether they are part of Mental Health system or outside the Mental Health system. If she was to open up, the people that are mandated to be served can easily be pushed out – and she doesn’t want to do this. Curt continued that MHSA money was intended for expansion of mental health services as designated by the State for mental health which is SMI and Medi-Cal eligible. This is where some of this came into play in making some the criteria and determination. However, the Department is looking at opening up to the extent possible in order to be sensitive to the community needs. b.i., ii. Yvonnia stated that the MHSA Plan was approved by the BOS on December 16<sup>th</sup> and part of the action items were the Mobile Crisis Team and Centralized Intake, just to name a few. They are also exploring telepsychiatry. There are several key areas that she is looking at in moving forward in 2015. iii. She has the Operational Department Assessment and one thing she wants to do as a County is see how we can better serve our clients. In order to do that, she needs to know that the infrastructure can support the direction in which we are going. There are many things coming down from the State – the Drug Medi-Call 1115 Waiver and more requirements for QI from our AOD contracts. She also wants to make sure that the staff are in the right positions based on workloads. She is looking at doing a gap analysis through a contract provider. Nothing has been finalized yet and the CEO is aware of the direction she would like to take the Department. c. The EQRO audit is scheduled to be here on February 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>. One thing the Department has made a significant progress in is Jeanette providing a presentation called, “All Things QI” to Exec Staff showing them a before and after. She believes that we are headed in the right direction. The last review was not so positive, but she thinks that when they hear Jeanette’s presentation they will see tremendous strides made to go in the right direction. d. No report.

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| <b>Recommendation/Action:</b> Information only  |
| <b>IX. Reports / Updates</b><br>a. Executive Committee<br>b. QIC Report   |
| <b>Discussion/Conclusion:</b> a. Richard had nothing to report at this time. b. Sally stated there was nothing to report.   |
| <b>Recommendation/Action:</b> None  |
| <b>X. Announcements</b>   |
| <b>Discussion / Conclusion:</b> Vince questioned the Community Partner's Meeting being combined with the MHSA Ongoing Planning Council Meeting. Iris responded that the decision was made to keep the two meetings separate. Carol stated that the Community Partner's Meeting was moved to take place just prior to the MHSA Ongoing Planning Council meeting. |
| <b>XI. Adjournment</b>  |
| <b>Discussion / Conclusion:</b> The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m. The next meeting is February 3, 2015.  |

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Hulsizer  
Recording Secretary

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Vince Ramos, Secretary  
Merced County Mental Health Board

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_