

SAN DIEGO COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM OF CARE
PEER COUNCIL MINUTES
NOVEMBER 2023
32 PARTICIPANTS

- **Welcome**

- Native American Heritage Month
- Presented by Lisa Sherman (Elder Navigator) and George Pojas (Health Promotions Director)
 - Native American Heritage Month highlights the culture, traditions and achievements of our nation's first people.
 - Some leaders that are acknowledged are Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, veterans and other tribal leaders.
 - There are 110 recognized tribes in California. 8-10 tribes are currently struggling to become recognized.
 - Some important days are listed below
 - Red Dress Day, also known as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People is another important day celebrated on May 5th. California Native American Day is on the fourth Friday of September. Indigenous People's Day is October 14th.
 - Indian Health Council services the North San Diego region. Departments include medical, dental, tribal family services, research, student development, pharmacy department, health promotions department, and marketing.
 - [Indian Health Council, Inc. - North County's Native American healthcare center.](#)
- Q&A
 - Peer Question: How aware are the Native American population of the peer support movement? Is the certification process being promoted in the community? How can we help spread the word?
 - *Answer: We have a lot of culturally based health solutions, however, we haven't been informed of the peer support certification. You can definitely get in touch with me in order to pass along any information.*
 - To get in contact:
 - George Pojas: Indian Health Council, Inc. Health Promotions Director; gpojas@indianhealth.com
 - Peer Question: What is the Dreamweaver consortium?
 - *Answer: The Dreamweaver consortium is the network of Native American clinics that we have established in San Diego.*

- **Review of Meeting Summary**

- **Council Updates and Announcements**

- In December, there is no Peer Council Meeting.

- Potential in-person Peer Council meeting in February.
- If you are interested in sharing your organization with the Peer Council or in a Town Hall use the link below.
 - [Peer Council Guest Speaker Interest Form](#)
- **Peer Support Partner Employment Opportunity** presented by Gina Misch
 - Kooth, an online mental health provider for ages 13-25, will be starting virtual services starting January 1st, 2024.
 - Looking to hire peer support specialists as practitioners through Kooth.
 - Bilingual is a plus for the position.
 - You do need to be certified as a peer support specialist in order to apply.
 - Other positions are also available.
 - Kooth [Job Opportunities \(paycomonline.net\)](#)
 - To Get In Contact:
 - Email Gina Misch - rmisch@kooth.com
 - Cal Hope Youth [CalHOPE Youth | Powered by Kooth](#)
 - Peer Question: All of my clientele are deaf or hard of hearing, so the chat enabled mental health access would be great. How is all of this paid for?
 - *Answer: All of our services will be free until 2026. After that, things might change due to our contract but we aren't sure yet.*
- **UCSD Focus Group Announcement** presented by Dr. CJ Valasek (Senior Research Associate at UCSD)
 - UCSD is holding a community engagement project under contract with the county of behavioral health services.
 - This project's purpose is to get as much feedback from under-represented and marginalized communities on their experience working in and accessing mental healthcare.
 - Some questions might include "What barriers are there to accessing mental healthcare?" "What should the county focus on?", "What are the county's strengths?" Gathering as much input as possible regarding making mental healthcare more culturally appropriate.
 - To get involved
 - Dr. CJ Valasek - UCSD cjvalasek@health.ucsd.edu
 - [Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management](#)
- **Open Forum**
 - What issues should be highlighted?
 - *Peer Comment: It seems like there are a lot of issues that we want to focus on. One of the responsibilities of this council is reporting to the county. Dr. CJ just mentioned that his group is going directly to behavioral health services. With this discussion we could narrow down our scope and have specific points to present to their focus group.*
 - *Peer Comment: We met with the cor team who's in charge of this contract. The Cor is going to help us address letters to the county about issues that we want to be addressed. The goal is to focus on one issue a year. If we can narrow this down to one practical thing that we can do this upcoming year, that would definitely help us.*

- *Peer Comment: I'd like to see a communication channel regarding information that will be affecting us, clubhouses, and other organizations in the behavioral health field. This way peers can stay informed of what's happening that affects us.*
- *(Member of the Cor Team): I will talk to the Cor lead and see how we can get some more communication setup. There are many departments in the county so if there is an issue with housing, we can direct you on who to contact. I'll share this information and I'll discuss with him if he is going to assign someone as his liaison or how we can arrange this from now on. In the meantime if you have something that you want to address with us, you can inform Sten and then Sten can contact the Cor.*
- Peer Question: What is a cor?
 - *Sten Answer: The Cor is the contract operational representative. We are one of the few councils involved with a contract. That's why you hear so much about NAMI. We are partially helping facilitate the council. We already have a relationship with the county because this is a county contract.*
- Peer Question: When are we going to pick that main topic that we are going to bring to the county?
 - *Sten Answer: I didn't expect us to get the issue nailed down today. I just wanted to start the conversation. However, it would be good to create a deadline for us to decide. This could be a good topic for our in-person meeting in the coming months.*
 - *Peer Response: Could we do a survey where we decide what to focus on this way? That way we can flesh out the idea at the in person February meeting.*
 - *Sten Answer: Yeah, that could be possible.*
- *Evan Hodges Comment: I wanted to respond to that request for a liaison to the county. I wanted to introduce my new team who was recently started at the county called the Behavioral Health Services Communication and Engagement Team. We can connect groups to subject matter expertise. We also have regional liaisons for mental health and substance use disorder. We would be happy to help work with the council.*
 - To get in contact:
 - Email engage.bhs@sdcounty.ca.gov or evan.hodges@sdcounty.ca.gov
- **CARE Court Presentation** presented by Jack Dailey (Director of policy and trading at the consumer center of the Legal Aid Society of San Diego) and Samantha Manganaro (Staff attorney at Legal Aid Society of San Diego)
 - CARE ACT - Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment Act
 - Legal Aid Society of San Diego & the Consumer Center
 - LASSD is San Diego's largest non-profit civil law firm offering free legal services to low income San Diegans.

- The Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy (Consumer Center) is the health and behavioral health team of LASSD.
- They help consumers access coverage and needed health services.
- Behavioral Health Patients' Rights Advocacy and administer the county's grievance and appeal system for outpatient Behavioral Health patients.
- The CARE Act (SB 1338) authorizes specified adult persons to petition a civil court to create a voluntary CARE agreement or a court-ordered CARE plan that may include treatment, housing resources, and other services for persons with untreated schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders.
 - It connects a person with a court-ordered CARE plan or agreement for up to 12 months, with the possibility to extend for an additional 12 months.
- Implementation Timeline
 - San Diego was part of the first cohort of counties to implement the CARE Act on October 1, 2023. In October, there were about 26 petitions filed. 3 were dismissed.
 - On December 1, 2023, Los Angeles will adopt the CARE Act.
 - All other counties in California by December 1, 2024.
- The Key Participants
 - Petitioner-Person who files the CARE Act petition with the court
 - Respondent-Person who is subject to the petition for the CARE process
 - Volunteer Supporter-Assists Respondent understand, make, communicate, implement, or act on their own life decisions during the CARE process
 - Public Defender-The attorney appointed to represent the respondent in CARE Act proceedings and matters related to CARE agreements and CARE plans
 - County Counsel-Representing Behavioral Health Agency
 - Judge-A neutral arbiter. Unless there is a dispute, will conduct care in an informal, non-adversarial atmosphere
- Who Can File a Petition?
 - An adult 18 years or older that is:
 - Someone who lives with Respondent
 - Family member of Respondent
 - Behavioral Health Professional (treated within last 30 days)
 - First Responder
 - Director or designee of:
 - Hospital (where currently hospitalized)
 - Nonprofit provider or facility (treated within 30 days)
 - County BH agency

- Office of Public Guardian/Conservator
 - Adult Protective Services
 - Respondent Eligibility Criteria
 - 18+ with diagnosis of Schizophrenia Spectrum or Other Psychotic Disorders
 - Severe and persistent symptoms that interfere with daily living
 - The person is not stabilized with ongoing voluntary outpatient treatment
 - Either unlikely to survive safely/independently in the community and the condition is deteriorating OR services and support are needed to prevent relapse or deterioration
 - Participation in CARE Act is the least restrictive alternative, AND
 - The person will likely benefit from participating in a CARE plan or CARE agreement
 - Eligible Diagnoses
 - Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders
 - Other Psychotic Disorders
 - Brief Psychotic Disorder
 - Substance/Medication Induced Psychotic Disorder
 - Catatonia Associated with another mental disorder
 - Unspecified Catatonia
 - Diagnoses not meeting eligibility
 - Psychotic disorder due to a general medical condition
 - Catatonia associated with another medical condition
 - Major depression with psychotic features
 - Any substance related disorder not listed above
 - Symptoms do have to be severe and persistent
 - What information is needed for the petition?
 - Respondent's name and address (or where they were last found)
 - Confirmation that respondent meets all 6 eligibility criteria
 - Either
 - A mental health declaration (CARE 101 Form) by a licensed behavioral health professional stating that no more than 60 days prior to petition, they examined respondent (or made multiple attempts to) and determined they met eligibility, or
 - Evidence that respondent was detained for at least two periods of intensive treatment, the most recent within 60 days.
 - Intensive treatment is defined as two 5250 hospitalizations (14 day hold), the second of which occurred within the last 60 days. 5150 holds for 72 hours or less do not help meet this criteria.
 - Care Process Flow

- [CARE Act Brief - CARE Process Flow 08.30.2023 \(2\) \(care-act.org\)](#)
- What does a Respondent in CARE Receive?
 - CARE provides respondents with a clinically appropriate, community-based set of services and supports that are culturally and linguistically competent. This includes clinically appropriate behavioral health care, stabilization medications, wellness and recovery supports, and connection to social services and housing.
 - Respondents served by CARE will need a diverse range of housing including clinically enhanced interim or bridge housing, licensed adult and senior care facilities, supporting housing, or housing with family and friends. The court may issue orders necessary to support the respondent in accessing housing, including prioritization for these services and supports.
- Housing Through the CARE Act
 - CARE Court does not guarantee housing, but CARE Plans will include a housing strategy that suits the different needs of CARE participants.
 - CARE Plans can help participants get priority access to suitable temporary housing funded by the state's Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program.
 - \$1.5 billion in funding to county BH entities through June 2027. This addresses immediate housing needs of people with significant behavioral health conditions experiencing homelessness.
- What if a Respondent chooses not to participate?
 - The respondent's failure to comply with an order shall not result in a penalty outside of this section, including, but not limited to, contempt or a failure to appear.
 - The Court may utilize existing authority under the LPS Act to ensure the respondent's safety.
 - Failure to complete CARE Plan may be used against respondent in conservatorship proceedings within 6 months of termination of CARE Plan.
- What if the county does not provide a court-ordered CARE Plan?
 - If the judge finds that the county failed to comply, they may issue an order imposing a fine up to \$1,000 per day, not to exceed \$25,000 for each individual violation.
 - Funds will be deposited into the CARE Act Accountability Fund to serve individuals who have schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, criminal justice involvement, hospitalization, or conservatorship.

- If 5+ reports of noncompliance within one year, then the judge may appoint someone to secure court ordered care for the respondent at the county's cost.
- Debunking misconceptions about the program
 - Misconception: Care Act will allow the court to mandate treatment.
 - *Reality: Care Act is voluntary treatment. Treatment is established for one year, with the potential of one additional renewal year.*
 - Misconception: The Care Act is for anyone with a behavioral health condition.
 - *Reality: Care Act is limited to a very small group of people. To be eligible, a person must have diagnosed schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder and not be in treatment.*
 - Misconception: The CARE Act program is designed only for people experiencing homelessness.
 - *Reality: Some people with a CARE Plan may be unhoused or experiencing housing instability. But the program is not specifically set up to address homelessness.*
- Self-Help Services for CARE Act Petitioners & Respondents
 - The CARE Act self-help center is located at the Hall of Justice and can provide help filling out forms and answering questions.
 - Self-Help Center Address:
 - Hall of Justice 330 West Broadway, Second Floor, Room 251 San Diego, CA 92101
 - OCARE Act Phone Line
 - 1-877-734-3258
- Q&A
 - Peer Question: Where can I find a list of the psychotic disorders that would be covered by the CARE Act?
 - *Answer: [CARE-Act-Eligibility-Criteria.pdf](#)*
 - Peer Question: Building the capacity to provide service might be a potential barrier with this. What is the county's plan for the expansion of this service as time goes on? How many clients are the county planning on taking on right now?
 - *Answer: I do know that the county has augmented contracts with telecare and CRF to increase capacities of those programs. They have a dedicated team at the county of case managers and community engagement workers specifically for CARE Act participants. My big concern is that this is creating two different classes of services for people in the community. If someone does take a CARE plan then they have this very hands-on service that walks them through the whole process. For the rest of the community, they go through the typical process of being*

referred to an outpatient clinic, wait time is involved, and the timeliness of that care has always been a concern.

- **NAMI San Diego's Community Advocacy Trainings**
 - NAMI National's SMARTS for Advocacy is an interactive training certification program that transforms passion and lived experience into skillful grassroots advocacy
 - It is open to those new to advocacy and those who have been amplifying voices for years
 - Completion certificates are achieved
 - After the completion of the base module, "Telling Your Story," advocates will be able to share their stories with the local community and policymakers
 - Every month a community advocate will share their story with the Peer Council
 - December Training Dates:
 - Telling Your Story Trainings:
 - December 6th, 2023 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
 - Reimagining Crisis Response Trainings:
 - December 12th, 2023 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
 - [Community Advocacy Training Interest Form](#)
 - Community Advocate of the Month:
 - Robert Wood-Community Advocate, on the board of directors for the Prison Scholar Fund, a part of the Federal Prison Priorities Committee for Dream.org
- **Community Updates, Questions, or News!**
 - NAMI San Diego is working with the county to host informational sessions in December and January regarding the CARE Act.
- **Thank you for Attending!**

Next Council Meeting: January 16th, 2023, 2:00pm – 3:30pm