

**Imperial County Mental Health Board  
Meeting Minutes  
April 20, 2021**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Benny Benavidez called to order the regular meeting of the Mental Health Board at 12:01 p.m. on April 20, 2021. The meeting held via zoom. **There was a quorum.**

**Roll Call:**

Present: Benny Benavidez, Carlos Acuna, Nancy Rhodes, Harold Walk, Nicole Castaneda, Pamela Mills-Morita, Raul Urena  
Absent: Supervisor Ray Castillo, Kurt Leptich, Hortencia Armendariz  
Staff/Guests: Leticia Plancarte-Garcia, Director of Behavioral Health Services, Maria Ruiz, Deputy Director of MHTU, Gabriela Jimenez, Deputy Director of Adults, Nancy Del Real, Deputy Director of Administration, Jose Lepe, BH Manager, Marcy Sesma, Admin. Services Supervisor/ MHB Liaison; Chief Gerardo, Calexico Police Department and Chair of the Sheriff's Association for the County of Imperial

**II. CHAIR/ BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:**

Chair Benavidez reported the CA Local Behavioral Health Boards/Commissions is in the process of going through nominations for a new governing board. He is presently the Vice President of the governing board. If there is an interest to serve, any advisory board members may apply. He is on the ballot for renewal of term. He will report after next month's quarterly meeting.

**III. ACTION ITEMS**

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion made by Pamela Mills-Morita to approve the minutes from March 16, 2021. Raul Urena second the motion. Motion made and passed by majority roll call vote:

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Aye</b>	<b>Nay</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Benny Benavidez	X		
Carlos Acuna	X		
Nancy Rhodes	X		
Harold Walk	X		
Hortencia Armendariz (L)	X		
Kurt Leptich (L)	X		
Pamela Mills-Morita	X		
Nicole Castaneda	X		
Raul Urena	X		

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chief Gerardo, Calexico Police Department and Chairman of the Imperial County Police Chiefs and Sheriff's Association (ICPCSA) introduced himself. Chief Gerardo attended

today's meeting to support the efforts of BHS and the Association. The relationship between ICBHS and the association is making great progress. Agencies are educating on each other on their agencies responsibilities. Mutual goal is to provide better services to the community in mitigation of 5150's cases.

**V. OLD BUSINESS:** None

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Mental Health Training for Law Enforcement:** Harold Walk inquired about local mental health trainings for law enforcement. Assembly Bill was recently updated to include the increase of mandatory mental health training for police officers. Chair Benavidez stated POST (Police Officer Standards & Training) is the authority that gives the training and certification to officers.

Chief Gerardo stated that officers do need additional training by mental health professionals. Recently, his department provided a de-escalation training to his officers that included the mental health population as top priority. It also included recognizing the signs, use of force, first responders, supervisor's reasonability, and coordination with mental health agencies. The board stated their interest of ICBHS providing a mental health education and training that is POST certified.

Director Plancarte-Garcia reported in the past few years, ICBHS offered Applied Suicide Intervention Support Training, Safe Talk, Mental Health First Aid, and Youth Mental Health First Aid training. These trainings target how to assist high-risk suicidal individuals. One challenge for law enforcement to attend is that they are short staffed and the amount of time that the trainings require. If there is a training, where ICBHS can send clinicians to participate and speak about the different diagnosis and the best approaches that is helpful to law enforcement and community members, ICBHS would participate.

**Directors Report**

**COVID-19 Update** – Leticia Plancarte-Garcia, Director of Behavioral Health Services stated the department does plan to re-open and is working on a strategic plan. The strategic plan will include a hybrid model. Clinics are currently assessing cases to determine priority for face-to-face appointments (high risk).

**CCRT Update** – Maria Ruiz, Deputy Director of Mental Health Triage & Engagement Services provided an update on the Crisis Co-Responding Team. Calls increased during the month of March. Eleven calls received. To date, the CCRT team has received 36 calls. The majority of the calls are from ECPD and IC Sheriff's Department. Twenty-five calls were suicidal, nine were homicidal, and two were gravely disabled. Out of the 36 calls, five were placed on a 5150. The average response time is 1.15 hours and is usually due to location and commute (north end). By the end of May, ICBHS will have stats on the pilot program. Maria continues to meet monthly with police department's to review this information and improve the program.

The advisory board discussed the need to create a Mental Health Specialty court to augment the clients who fall into criminal justice system and mental health issues are placed secondary to therapeutic needs.

**Innovation Project Update:** Maria Wyatt, Behavioral Health Manager provided an overview of the Innovation Project. Survey results revealed that the majority want an innovation project to target the 13-25 age group on wellness. Some board members felt that wellness was a broad area. Board member Carlos Acuna recommends obtaining feedback from the target population identified.

Board members had a discussion regarding a recent innovation program proposed have not addressed some of the major deficiencies and shortfall that are prevalent in the County. The discussion entailed using funds to address homelessness, youth programs associated with law enforcement and college outreach. Benavidez expressed concern about the type of programs that were proposed last cycle of innovation approval and the need for BH to reach out to agencies who could assist in creating meaningful programs targeting major problematic deficiencies in delivery of effective BH services.

**Next Meeting Agenda Item:** Board Members requested an update on the MHSA Funding at Mays meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

As there was no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m. The next meeting is at noon on Tuesday, May 18, 2021. The next meeting will be via zoom.