

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Scott Gilman, MSA, CBHE

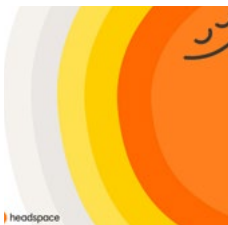
Pandemic 2.0: New Hope and an Increasing Public Health Threat

As we begin the new year, all eyes are focused on vaccinations. Every day we receive more information about prioritization. The best source for locally updated information on vaccinations, testing or other questions related to COVID-19 can be found on the San Mateo County Health [website](#).

2021 brings hope for an end to the pandemic and the return to a new semblance of normalcy. That said, pandemic fatigue is clearly an ever increasing threat to public health. BHRS is working with Public Health to publish a public health advisory in order to raise the awareness of toxic stress and pandemic fatigue, and provide recommendations and resources.

In addition, BHRS is contributing to a social media campaign designed to push out messages of hope and promote positive actions individuals can take to maintain their health and wellness, and get through the pandemic. You may have noticed the "Holidays at Home" theme when the campaign first launched, as well as the #SMCGettingThroughCOVID theme which targets older adults. Watch for more to come.

Keeping San Mateo County Strong!



This year has affected all of us in different ways. But there's one thing that keeps San Mateo County strong: a sense of community. That's why Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and Headspace are working together to provide free resources to help residents weather this storm.

[Sign up](#) to access Headspace meditations, sleep sounds, and movement exercises, designed to help you care for your mind—all free through August 2021— if you live, work or go to school in San Mateo County. Because in times like these, a little support goes a long way.

Phoenix Garden Flourishes

Grab Your Mask for Some Fun & Exercise while Social Distancing!

The idea of a therapeutic and agriculturally productive garden at the site where the Hillcrest Juvenile Hall once stood (at 21 Tower Rd in San Mateo) was years in the making. In 2006, two of the garden's proponents (Toni DeMarco and Tracy Parker) drew up a concept plan for the Phoenix Garden. The name, "Phoenix Garden" represents the rebirth of not only the site itself, but also of the people for whom the garden would benefit. In 2010, Hillcrest Juvenile Hall was demolished and the plan to transform the site into a beautiful therapeutic garden began. The proposed design integrates naturalized open spaces, areas for an educational working/learning lab, and programs which will focus all activities within a therapeutic framework.



Newly installed lavender labyrinth.

32.4%

Revenue Ratio (R3)

9,030

Total Clients

713

Admitted

681

Discharged

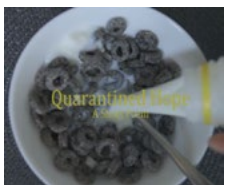
Current Projects

Several projects are currently underway, under the supervision of Kris Jensen, Project Manager/Volunteer Coordinator and Regina Moreno, BHRS Clinical Services Manager: approximately 40 fruit trees in the garden were planted in January 2016, and more are scheduled to be planted in early 2021; the newly planted lavender labyrinth which has long been a concept for the center piece of the garden since its inception, will provide a quiet therapeutic experience and a place for community members and clients to meditate and center themselves; a hoop house/green house was recently installed and will house an aquaponics system (growing edible plants and crops in water fortified naturally by marine life); and the Eagles Scouts built raised garden beds.

Volunteers Needed

Community and client volunteers are needed to support, sustain, and fulfill the vision of the Phoenix Garden. Join us for our monthly volunteer workday on the 3rd Saturday of each month, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Volunteers work on projects such as, companion planting around the lavender labyrinth, watering the tree orchard areas, sheet mulching, fencing, and other projects. The number of volunteers is currently limited due to COVID-19—contact Kris at: krisxjensen@gmail.com for information. If you are interested in being involved in this project, would like to receive notifications of planned activities, or are interested in holding a team building event or client activity on site, contact Regina at: rmoreno@smcgov.org.

Inspiring Hope During Quarantine



Check out the short film "[Quarantine Hope](#)" created by Burlingame High School students, Ryan Kang and Keunho Kim. Their film took first place in Each Mind Matters'

Directing Change Program in the Hope & Justice category. The film is an inspiring story of how Ryan uses poetry to help him cope—and importance of finding healthy outlets to deal with difficult emotions.

Lived Experience Academy Graduates Youngest Cohort

A small but diverse group of young adults, age 18–26

years old, became the youngest cohort to graduate from the Lived Experience Academy (conducted by the BHRS Office of Consumer & Family Affairs) and to join the Speakers Bureau from the Live Experience & Education Workgroup (LEEW). The group consisted of members from different ethnic backgrounds and diverse communities who were united by their desire to learn from the behavioral health challenges they encountered, personally or from a loved one, and used them as lessons to help others.



Through the six-week academy, participants go through a process of self-inquiry and examine the difficult events in their lives to find how their own resourcefulness, creativity, kindness and other qualities, as well as help from others, have helped them overcome their difficulties, develop resiliency and become wiser and stronger. Participants see themselves not as defective, troubled or damaged, but as bright, strong, complete, and capable individuals who have much to offer to their communities and to BHRS.

“LEA made me feel better. I learned that it’s OK that I felt pain and fear. I learned that my story is as important as any other story. That I am strong for going through it and for being resilient. It made me reflect of how I have grown to become a strong person compared to years ago. I can say I am proud for becoming the woman I am today” said one graduate.

Besides learning to share their life stories, graduates learned about BHRS and the importance of bringing their voices to the work we do. They (along with other LEEW graduates) are available to collaborate in BHRS trainings, committees, work groups, Health Equity Initiatives, panels, and such. The next academy will be held in spring 2021 and clients/family members are encouraged to apply. For more information, or to request a client/family member speaker for your event, contact Jairo Wilches at jwilches@smcgov.org

Employee Service Awards



Congratulations to following BHRS staff for their many years of dedication and commitment to helping San Mateo County residents live longer, better lives.

30 Years

- Robert Deirossi, South County Clinic Adult
- Ana Quinonez, Youth Case Management
- Sonia Velasquez, Primary Care Interface

20 Years

- Eliseo Amezcua, Alcohol and Other Drug Services
- Noelle Bruton, Youth Services
- Elizabeth Downard, South County Clinic Adult
- Ivette Huerta Roca, Pre to Three
- Nikki Kanakis, Alcohol and Other Drug Services
- Danielle Lacampagne, Conservatorship
- Amelia Leveni, School Based Mental Health
- Theresa Murray-Laden, Pharmacy
- Louise Robaina, Child Welfare
- Helen Rodriguez, Contracts Management
- Maria Tan, Therapeutic Day School
- Christina Webb, Conservatorship

10 Years

- Vaughn Baker, School Based Mental Health
- Sisilia Fifita, East Palo Alto Clinic
- Maureen Lin, Primary Care Interface
- Juilien Ling, Fiscal
- Yahaira Ortega, Pathways
- Kristal Powers, Adult Services, Central County Clinic
- Hughette Santiago, Conservatorship

Prevention Services Co-Located in Low-Income Housing Approved



On November 21, 2020 the California Mental Health Oversight and Accountability Commission approved a four-year, \$925,000 project that co-locates Prevention and Early Intervention Services in low

income housing complexes. This was one of 35 ideas submitted by individuals, groups and community-based agencies responding to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation Project solicitation in January 2019. The project targets low-income as a risk factor for poor

behavioral health outcomes in young adults, age 18-25.

Transition into adulthood can be a stressful process, and exacerbated for youth living in poverty, as young people become more independent and make decisions that can significantly shape their lives. This is recognizably, an important time to provide behavioral health education and services.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, young adults (18-25 years) have the highest prevalence of mental illness, including severe mental illness. However, young adults with a mental illness receive treatment at a lower rate than adults. In San Mateo County, only 4.9% (413) of eligible Medi-Cal 18 to 20-year-old beneficiaries received specialty mental health services.

The program, launching in FY 21/22, will provide prevention and early intervention services, including behavioral health resources, supports, screening, referrals and linkages for young adults—directly on-site at various affordable housing properties (there are currently 86 apartments/2,783 units in San Mateo County that serve low income communities). The coordination of behavioral health and social services with affordable housing will aid in decreasing stigma and reducing barriers to accessing behavioral health care.

The comprehensive and culturally relevant program, guided by a young adult advisory board, will include a behavioral health young adult peer educator and a harm reduction specialist to provide:

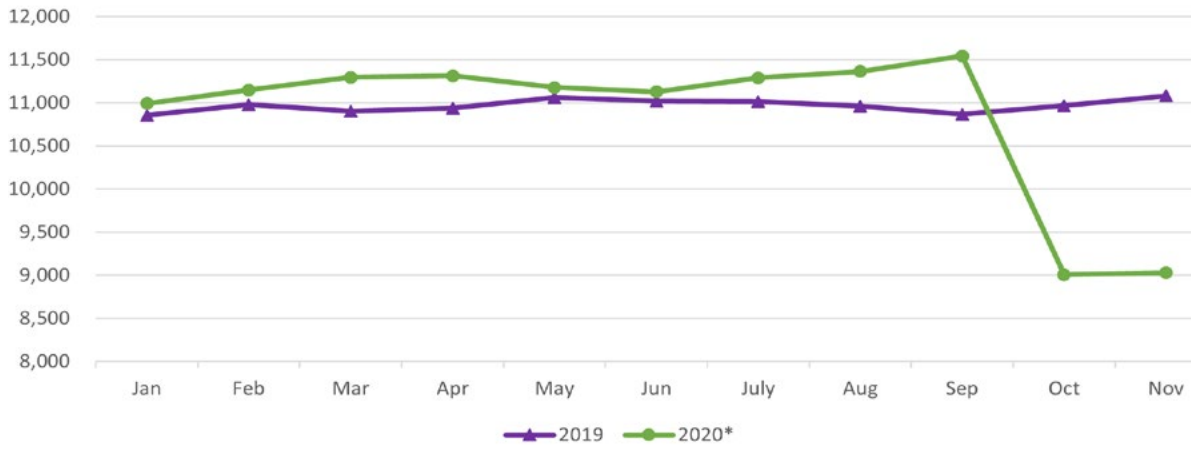
- Preventative behavioral health and harm reduction workshops
- Peer support group(s) and crisis support
- Social determinants of health and behavioral health screenings
- Referrals and linkages to resources for mental health and substance use

By connecting young adults with behavioral health information, supports, screening and treatment for mental illness earlier in life, we hope it will reduce the negative consequences of an undiagnosed mental illness—including visits to psychiatric emergency—as well as improve their overall quality of life. More info on the County's [MHSA program](#).

NEW COVID MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES PAGE
smchealth.org/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellness-resources

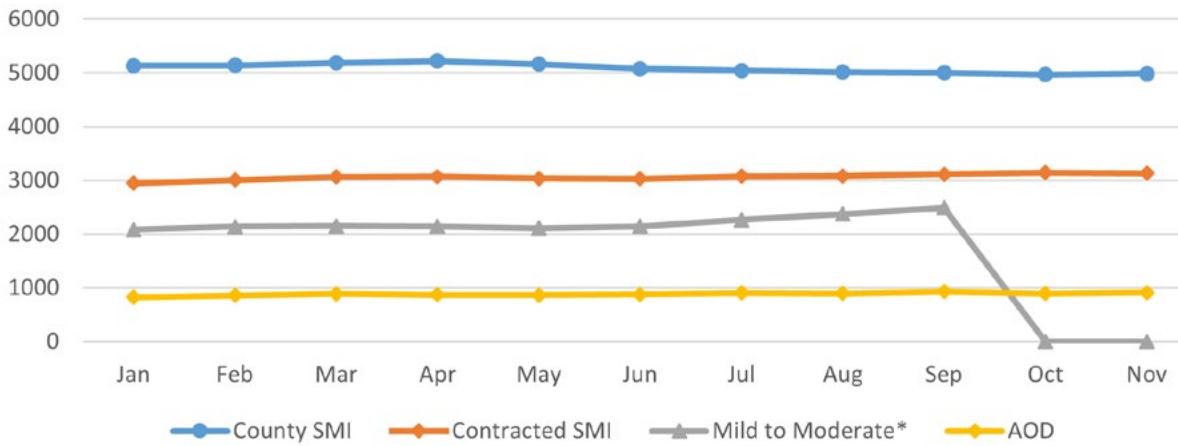
SNAPSHOT: BHRS Clients - as of November 30, 2020

Total BHRS Clients by Month (2020 vs. 2019)



*October 2020 decline due to mild to moderate services reverting to Health Plan San Mateo 10/1/20.

Clients by Service Category - 2020



*October 2020 decline due to mild to moderate services reverting to Health Plan San Mateo 10/1/20.

Service Category	Total Clients	Admitted - November	Discharged -November
Mental Health Services County SMI	4,984	367	379
Mental Health Services Contracted SMI	3,135	202	201
Mental Health Services Mild to Moderate*	0	0	0
AOD Services	911	144	101
Total BHRS Clients	9,030	713	681

Total clients are unduplicated within each service category, however, if a client received services in more than one category during the same period, the client is counted in multiple categories. *Mild to Moderate services reverted to Health Plan of San Mateo on 10/1/20.

R3% - 32.4% (revenue ratio of billed services as of 11/30/20)