



Kern County Behavioral Health Board

Annual Report



Director Alison Burrowes, MA., LCSW

PO BOX 1000, Bakersfield, CA 93302





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Chair's Foreword



Sonia Silva, MPA
 Chair, Behavioral Health Board
 Director, CSUB International Students and Programs
 Lecturer, Department of Biology (CSUB 1029)

“It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as the Chair of the Kern County Behavioral Health Board (BHB). The Board has kept the mission of advocating for individuals and families living with mental illness and/or addiction in the forefront of their minds when meeting with the diligent staff at Kern County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (KernBHRS). There have been changes in board members and leadership. The transitions were seamless due to collaboration, communication, and hard work. I am delighted to share a few highlights from the last year.”

988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline: 988 is a crisis line that the community can call to talk to trained clinicians that facilitate suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis. The 988 line was expanded this year which better serves our community.

Mental Health Services Act (MHSA): MHSA is a voter approved 2004 proposition requiring transformation of the mental health system. KernBHRS was recently awarded MHSA innovation funding to further develop street outreach services for our housing insecure population.

Kern Youth Resilience Program: Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) Student Grant is funded through a competitive grant awarded to four large counties in California. I was delighted to hear, as a result of the grant funding, this year, a foster youth was able to receive the necessary therapy and support to address their mental health. This support not only improved their grades and personal relationships but also helped them to thrive in various aspects of their life.

Data Notebook: The Data Notebook provides performance outcomes data for the Kern County. This year, KernBHRS staff created a survey and used the results of the survey along with other data to provide stakeholders valuable behavioral health data.

Thank you to the BHB, KernBHRS staff, community partners, and most importantly our clients for making this a transformative year.



Member Representation by District Supervisor



District 1 – Phillip Peters
Sonia Silva, Chair
Jeffrey Burdick, Member
Michael Herrera, Member



District 2 – Zack Scrivner
Dian Schneider, 1st Vice Chair
Tiara King, Member



District 3 – Jeff Flores
Michael Bryant, 2nd Vice Chair
Bryson Gholston, Member
LaShawna Stowe, Member



District 4 – David Couch
David Kessler, Parliamentarian
Flossie White, Member
BreAnne Patterson, Member



District 5 – Leticia Perez
Genora McClanahan - Member

2023 Board Committees

Adult Treatment & Recovery Services

Chair: Bryson Gholston
Liaison: Emily Lyles
Support: LaTicia Davis

Children's Treatment & Recovery Services

Co-Chairs: Dian Schneider & Jeff Burdick
Liaison: Jennie Sill & Erika Rosales

System Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC)

Co-Chair: David Kessler
Liaison: Lesleigh Davis
Support: Selma Gonzalez

Kern County Behavioral Health Board

Board Mission Statement

The Mission of the Kern County Behavioral Health Board is to advocate for individuals and families living with mental illness and/or addiction by support and oversight of Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

About the Board Members

Each member of the Board of Supervisors appoints three county residents to represent their district and the Chair of the Board of Supervisors also appoints a staff representative from their office. Supervisors are asked to appoint members in three category types: consumer or family member, professional, and public interest, and attempt to make appointments that reflect the diverse ethnic and cultural background of their district.

The Behavioral Health Board must comply with Welfare & Institutes Code Section 5604(a), which requires:

1. One staff member of the Chair of the Board of Supervisors.
2. Minimum of 50% (8 members) of the total membership shall be consumers, parents, spouses, siblings, or children of consumers who are receiving or have received behavioral health services.
3. Minimum of 20% (3 members) shall be consumers.
4. Minimum of 20% (3 members) shall be family members of consumers.
5. The remaining members should include individuals who have experience and knowledge of the behavioral health system and provide a balance of health professionals and public interest members. Additionally, members can include youth (minimum age 16 up until the age of 25) or culturally significant representatives from underserved communities of Kern.
6. The composition of the Behavioral Health Board should reflect the ethnic diversity of the consumer population and the demographics of the county as a whole to the extent feasible and individuals who have experience and knowledge of the behavioral health system.
7. One member shall be a veteran (effective January 1, 2023).



Message from the Director



Alison Burrowes
Director KernBHRIS

Kern County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (KernBHRIS) is pleased to partner with the Behavioral Health Board (BHB) to present this annual report for the Board of Supervisors and our community members. Our Behavioral Health Board is comprised of consumers, family members, interested community members, and representatives of the Board of Supervisors. The diversity of this membership allows the board to provide varied perspectives and valuable feedback and input for KernBHRIS.

In 2023 the department saw a change in leadership, as former Director Stacy Kuwahara transitioned to the County Administrative Office and I took over as the new Behavioral Health Director. It's been an honor to lead KernBHRIS over the past few months. With

over 22 years with the department, I have had the opportunity to work in many different divisions and roles. My experience working within KernBHRIS has been incredibly rewarding and filled with opportunities. As such, I am dedicated to creating a strong employee community to foster growth and development within our organization. By prioritizing employee wellbeing and connection, I believe we are investing in our staff and laying the foundation for providing high-quality services that support the health of our community. I'm very proud of the achievements and progress of the department over the past year. I've included a snapshot of just a few initiatives below. Throughout this report you'll find much more information on areas of focus and accomplishments departmentwide.

Payment Reform

This past year has been one of considerable changes for our department. Much of this change was driven by State led CalAIM Behavioral Health Payment Reform and other new mandates. Payment Reform moved counties from cost-based reimbursement towards value-based care, with the first phase shifting our payment system to a rate-based system. While some of our contracts had previously been paid based on negotiated rates, for most providers and for our own services teams, this rate system was new. This change required significant training and support for our own staff and for our contractors. We are grateful to our Finance Division who coordinated the work to support this transition.

Employee Wellness

In 2023 the department continued to support employee wellness programming. This included collaborating with local vendors to offer healthy food options onsite, wellness seminars, onsite yoga classes, and a partnership with the Public Health Department on their Grounded in Health Initiative, a yearlong project with monthly press conferences highlighting opportunities and education about physical and mental wellbeing. Expanding on this programming and finding new

opportunities to support employee wellbeing will be a continued area of focus for the department moving forward. We understand the wellbeing of our workforce positively impacts the work we do in the community.

New Electronic Health Record

The department transitioned from the Cerner electronic health (EHR) records to SmartCare, a new product by Streamline, in July 2023. We joined a semi-statewide implementation including almost two dozen other counties supported by CalMHSA (California Mental Health Services Authority). This transition was necessary as the Cerner EHR product is being discontinued in its current version and the department required a product that would support the new state payment system. The transition took months of preparation and required staff from various areas of the department to support the implementation process. The transition required training to support around 2,000 internal and contractor staff. This was a tremendous feat led by our EHR Implementation Team, and we are very grateful for the long hours these staff dedicated to support a smooth transition.

Housing and Homelessness

Housing and homelessness continue to be a priority for our community and key area of focus for the department in 2023. This past year the department further expanded our work with homeless shelters to standardize the services available to individuals at the various shelter locations locally. Street outreach also expanded with the implementation of our Mobile Clinic Street Psychiatry.

The team set the foundations for a program that will utilize an RV and sprinter van to deliver psychiatric services in the field to homeless individuals, specifically targeting those residing in hard-to-reach areas and those who are resistance to clinic-based services. This program will be fully operational in 2024.

New State Mandates

The work began to prepare for several upcoming state mandated service changes. These include Senate Bill 43, which changes the LPS and grave disability standards, most notably with the inclusion of standalone substance use; the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act, which provides community-based services for individuals who are challenging to engage experiencing a psychotic disorder; and Mobile Crisis Response, which is designed to provide relief to clients experiencing a behavioral health crisis, including through de-escalation and stabilization techniques, where possible avoiding unnecessary emergency department care, psychiatric inpatient hospitalizations and law enforcement involvement. Mobile Crisis in December 2023, CARE Court services will commence in Fall 2023, and SB 43 changes will go into effect by January 2026. Expect to hear further updates on these programs in future reports.



Division Reports

Executive Administration - Alison Burrows, Director

Human Resources

KernBHRS Human Resources (HR) had a dynamic year in 2023 with a change in leadership and a focus on expanding recruitment and retention strategies. The promotion of Sarah Gutierrez to the County Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the appointment of Sandra Arellano as KernBHRS Human Resources Manager, brought a new perspective to the division. As an established employee within HR, Sandra brought with her several years of experience in the various branches within the division. This year, a focus on employee wellness and community engagement demonstrated the HR commitment to supporting the organization's workforce and fostering a positive work environment. We look forward to Human Resources making significant strides in driving HR initiatives forward throughout the next year.

Privacy & Compliance

The KernBHRS Privacy and Compliance Office is tasked with prevention, detection and correction of fraud, waste, and abuse, and with the protection of our client's health information. During the last year the team grew to include a full-time BH Planning Analyst to assist with data mining and identification of privacy and compliance risks within our system. A part-time Administrative Coordinator was also added to assist with policy reviews to ensure that our department policies are updated bi-annually, as required by the Office of Inspector General and Department of Health Care Services. The Privacy and Compliance Office partners with our Human Resources division to conduct investigations on matters of privacy, ethics, and compliance. Our Compliance Office is Certified by the Association of Workplace Investigators (AWI) and our Planning Analyst has recently attended the AWI Investigator Training Academy to ensure consistency and thoroughness in the investigations being conducted. To support our system, this year staff developed online training for providers to stay current with the HIPAA trainings mandated by the State.

Public Information

The department's Public Information Office also saw staffing changes in 2023, with three new staff taking over these responsibilities for the department. Lead staff, Lou Groce was appointed the Public Information Officer for KernBHRS in April of 2023. Groce came to the department with over a decade of experience in media relations, marketing, and communications. This is Groce's first position at KernBHRS after working in collegiate athletics for the entirety of his professional career, including an 18-month stint as a Sports Information Director at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB). During his time at CSUB, he developed many connections on campus and throughout the community. In his short time with KernBHRS, Lou has focused his attention on developing a sustainable and effective communication plan, launched an interactive weekly department newsletter, and expanded the department's social media presence.



Clinical Services - Jessica Armstrong, Deputy Director

Adult System of Care

In 2023, Adult System of Care (ASOC) continued to evolve and make improvements to assist quality care for our clients. This includes working diligently to fully staff and support our treatment teams to align with the redesign and provide meaningful and purposeful services. Many of our Adult Service locations received a site refresh, providing a warm welcome and professional appearance to the clinics. In addition, our department began navigating the new SmartCare Electronic Health Record in July 2023 that improved flow of service delivery and collaboration between treatment providers.

The Specialty Services Treatment Team moved to the Medical Services division, while Access & Assessment (A&A) was moved to the ASOC division. This move allowed for streamlining the next phase of the redesign as the Outpatient Teams become access points.

The Access & Assessment (A&A) team oversees the monitoring of first-time service referral data, graduation data and processes, and monthly metro meetings. A&A has worked closely with the Outpatient Teams (NE RAWC, SEBA, & WEST RAWC) to identify ways to reduce wait times, increase access of same day services and minimize gaps in service delivery as we become access points.

The outpatient teams, (NE RAWC, SEBA WEST RAWC) successfully graduated over 140 clients to our lower level of care community MCP Providers. In addition, incorporated Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) dyads on each team to specifically accommodate those young adults using the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) model. This approach engages the individual in treatment and increases independence.

The Adult Wraparound (AWA) team served 769 clients in 2023. This intensive treatment team reduces hospital recidivism and crisis service utilization. The Bakersfield Referral Team (BRT) joined ASOC in 2022, and in 2023 the team continued to grow and positively impacted the community. This team provides outreach to adults and families in our community that are resistant towards mental health services and not yet linked. BRT expedites linkage to outpatient services building rapport and encouraging engagement with mental health services. During 2023 the team successfully linked 89 of the 184 referrals received.

The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team is a 24/7 access to care team providing support to our highest level of care clients, the team has been able to successfully support 90+ highly acute level 4 clients in recent months maintaining fidelity to the ACT model and caseload ratio of 10 clients per 1 ACT staff. ACT successfully transferred 54 clients to a lower level of care in 2023.

The Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) team petitioned 13 new clients for court supervised mental health services and serves these clients ongoing in tandem with ACT team. Many more individuals were linked to volunteer services. AOT maintains professional connections and communications with both the metro Bakersfield court system and outlying courts, including Delano.

The Wellness, Independence & Senior Enrichment (WISE/VSOP) teams have participated in various Outreach and Education services and continue serving our seniors 60+ population with geropsychiatric services. The team has ongoing collaboration with Adult Protective Services and Aging and Adult Services to receive referrals.



In partnership with the Housing Authority of the County of Kern (HACK), multiple No Place Like Home (NPLH) housing projects have been completed and are currently in operation providing Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for individuals with mental illness who have experienced chronic homelessness.

- Pioneer Cottages had its grand opening in August 2022 and is currently at max capacity serving a total of 36 units with 16 of those units made available to PSH.
- Benton Park Cottages opened its doors in March 2023 and has since been available for 24 units and 12 of those units for PSH.
- Glenwood Street Apartments in Delano has 5 NPLH units with all units being occupied for PSH.

KernBHRS currently provides supportive housing adjunct treatment services to NPLH voucher recipients with additional targeted case management, linkage to community providers, monitoring of current treatment needs, education on coping skills/independent living skills, and crisis intervention. KernBHRS is present at all sites several times a week along with Clinica Sierra Vista that provides services to Glenwood Street Apartments.

Additionally, Housing Services applied for and was granted the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Grant (BHBH) for a total of 15.1 million dollars. KernBHRS has partnered with the HACK and CityServe to provide bridge housing rental assistance at the new CityServe apartment complex. Housing will be provided for those who have a mental illness and/or substance use disorder while experience chronic homelessness. 39 units within this complex will be designated for KernBHRS. The Bridge Housing program will also provide funding for a phase II of Packed for Recovery, where individuals will be provided with a duffle bag containing clothing, hygiene items, and snacks to ensure that they have the essentials to be successful at their new housing placements. Additionally, the Bridge Housing grant will fund a pet assistance program that will focus on providing services such as supplies, medical care, and day care to our bridge housing recipients pets.

During the 2023 Calendar year KernBHRS Housing Services placed 487 individuals into housing. Housing Services facilitated 34 total Housing Ambassador meetings with 10 for KernBHRS and 24 for our contracted providers which include Mental Health Systems, Clinica Sierra Vista, College Community Services, and Child Guidance. There were quarterly trainings for the Quality Standards Providers and 166 site inspections were conducted with a total of 5 plans of corrections issues for 2023. To ensure the continued health and safety of clients and providers, Housing Services has continued to conduct COVID-19 monitoring to identify and report exposures to department operations and treatment teams.

Kern Linkage Division

The Homeless Adult Team (HAT) has staff stationed at numerous shelters including Brundage Lane Navigation Center, M Street Navigation Center, The Mission at Kern County, and Open Door Network to provide quick access and a point of entry and linkage into services. Additionally, HAT provides adjunct services to other Adult System of Care primary teams who determine if their client residing at the shelters can benefit from additional supportive services and enhanced client care. HAT provides daily intensive services to engage homeless client population while at the shelters and provides weekly on-site services to assist clients with accessing services and linkage into mental health services. HAT offers ongoing outreach and engagement to the sheltered homeless population to provide opportunities into mental health services and increase participation. Moreover, HAT collaborates with Flood Ministries to provide outreach services and offers same day appointments and assessment for homeless population to help increase client engagement and participation into mental health services.

The Supportive Pathways Opportunities (SPO) program serves individuals with a serious mental illness who have been found incompetent to stand trial for felony offenses. The program uses the Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) model with a focus on intensive community treatment. Staff continue to work directly with the



legal system to identify individuals who may be appropriate for the program. Over the last year, SPO has served a total of 48 individuals, 19 of which have successfully completed the program and have transitioned to lower level of care teams.

The Mobile Clinic with Street Psychiatry (MCSP) is a voluntary program and is designed to reduce barriers to psychiatric and behavioral health services. Deployment of the mobile clinics will ensure critical services are readily available when and where our clients need them most. MCSP will be providing psychiatric support and medical services to individuals facing homelessness. Based on their needs, MCSP will offer a variety of service modalities designed to provide mental health support for clients working to improve their social functioning and coping abilities, as well as offering external vocational and educational opportunities. MCSP serves adults 18-years and older, who are homeless, at risk of being homeless and who have a history of homelessness, psychiatric hospitalizations, incarceration(s), or are currently on probation. These individuals must also have a chronic and persistent mental illness and may also have a dual diagnosis (mental health primary disorder and a secondary substance abuse disorder).

Substance Use Division

The Recovery Innovations pilot program launched in May of 2023 at the L St. Clinic. This program provides monetary incentives to Medi-Cal beneficiaries with a stimulant use disorder when they provide a stimulant-free urine drug test. The program follows an established protocol developed by the Department of Health Care Services to assist those with a stimulant use disorder to establish and maintain abstinence, as there are no medications available as a treatment option for this group. A second program launched in November of 2023 at Community Service Organization garnering positive reviews from UCLA. More providers are expected to launch in 2024, as this pilot is now a covered service within DMC-ODS.

The Gateway team underwent some changes to improve their availability and the work they do for our department and the community. In July the team was renamed to the “SUD Access Line” to distinguish their role in our system of care by screening and referring individuals seeking SUD treatment to our network of providers. The second change was to split the team (Blue and Green) and added a second supervisor to provide additional administrative support for this 24-hour team.

The SUD Division, along with the mental health system of care and our providers, participated in training and launch of the new Electronic Health Record (EHR), SmartCare, in July of 2023. This prompted many processes to move outside of the EHR, resulting in issues reporting data to various entities. The department continues to work toward increasing knowledge of reporting capabilities to support staff.

In July, outpatient Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in partnership with Medical Services, launched at our L St. facility. This program is staffed by our Addiction Psychiatrist and Addiction Fellow in order to provide treatment for opioid use disorders to clients within our system of care. After initial challenges with receiving limited referrals, changes were made to expand access with positive results. The clinic has approximately 20 clients as of February 2024 with expansion plans to increase capacity up to 40 patients in the year.

The Recovery Station transitioned from SUD to Clinical Plan Services and continues to provide services to adults in Bakersfield at the Kentucky St. location. The SUD Prevention Team transitioned to the Department Supports Division in mid-2023 and their work continues with Friday Night Live clubs at various middle and high schools, at which they provide educational presentations to the community, Naloxone training and distribution, and manage social media accounts that share information to various demographic.

The programs and teams previously assigned to the Recovery Supports Division were reassigned to other divisions as part of the reorganization of the Department. The MHSA-funded Consumer Family Learning Centers (CFLC) continued to provide peer services to members and consumers at the CCS Ridgecrest HOPE Center and the CCS Tehachapi Consumer Learning Center. During 2023, the required stakeholders approved a plan to contract the Bakersfield CFLC program. The Self-Empowerment Team, including Peer Support Specialists and Substance Use Disorder Specialists, were assigned to support the Bakersfield CFLC.

Children's System of Care

In our Children's System of Care (CSOC) Children grow and flourish when they have caring families, friends, teachers, and communities around them that mirror back their goodness and support their natural resiliency. We celebrate our children's teams, our incredible and selfless staff, who are dedicated to our children's well-being, happiness, and security. Whether staff are administrative or direct services, they are always looking for opportunities to better our children and families' lives and assist them to bounce back when they have faced challenges.

The Multi-Agency Integrated Services Team (MIST) team has been busy providing the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) of Treatment Foster Care; recruiting, training, and providing 24/7 support to our Resource Parents that care for some of our most vulnerable youth.

The Transitional Age Youth (TAY) team uses cultural sensitivity and recognition of the unique needs of this population as a foundation of their work. Our TAY team understands and is passionate about the idea of providing services that utilize approaches and language that invite our youth into their journey to adulthood. They are certified in the EBP of Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model and conduct regular trainings to other behavioral health providers, schools, agencies, and anyone who is interested in increasing their skills to be effective with this population.

The Foster Care Team provides immediate trauma informed care to foster youth who have recently entered into protective custody due to abuse or neglect. They provide caring conversations and support to children who have experienced immense loss and work to help the child increase their sense of safety during an uncertain time.

The Juvenile Probation Psychiatric Services (JPPS) and Crossroad teams support our juvenile justice involved youth that are in a youth detention center. These teams take the opportunity to engage youth in treatment who may have otherwise have not sought treatment on their own. This year our juvenile justice teams have worked diligently to increase their outreach to help decrease stigma, and bridge families into aftercare treatment and recovery.

The Continuum of Care team have worked closely with our youth in our local Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTP) to coordinate care between agencies supporting a more cohesive treatment team to make it easier for our youth to meet their goals, and experience healing, and recovery.

The Youth Wraparound team and newly formed Youth Bridge team have been strategically stationed in Kern Medical Center to provide an immediate response that provides best practice crisis care. They intervene with youth and families at a tender and sensitive time and help to identify youth's needs, working to create security through both short term and long-term planning that will return youth back to their normalized activities.

This good work helps the continuous recovery of our children, made possible by the many caring hands of our Children's System of Care (CSOC) staff.



Quality Improvement Division

The Quality Improvement Division (QID) ensured the department successfully fulfilled all network adequacy requirements for mental health and substance use programs. The research section of QID partnered with the system to implement seven performance improvement projects. These projects helped to reduce no show rates, increase access to services and began developing the healthcare data exchange with Kern County's emergency room departments. The documentation compliance branch of the QID partnered with the Electronic Health Record (EHR) Implementation team to plan, train, support, and deploy the new HER which allows for quicker and more efficient documentation for front line staff to assist with providing treatment within the community. The policy branch of the QID ensured the implementation of 67 Information Notices published by the California Department of Health Care Services and successfully facilitated over 200 program or documentation reviews.

Specialty Clinical Services - Robin Taylor, Deputy Director

Clinical Plan Services

In 2023, the Clinical Plan Services Division was established and is comprised of the East Bakersfield Children's Outpatient Teams, adult and child outpatient behavioral health contractors, Telecare Bakersfield Recovery Station, Flood Bakersfield Ministries, and the Contracts and Contract Monitoring Teams.

The East Bakersfield Children's Outpatient teams continue to provide services to address the emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs of clients and families in their geographic service area. Additionally, efforts were made to apply for and secure grant funding for education for Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) that will be delivered to children ages 2-7 enrolled in our system of care who have been identified as requiring intensive therapy, and their families. The Clinical Plan Services Division administrator partnered with supervisors to review processes, identify challenges, and implement solutions to address the needs of both clients and staff.

The Clinical Plan Services Division administration oversees adult and children's outpatient behavioral health contracts with Child Guidance Clinic, Clinica Sierra Vista, and College Community Services. Special attention has been given to increase access to resources while continuing to expand communication between KernBHRS and contractors, providing the necessary support for the transition to a rate-based-system of payment for behavioral health services to ensure the quality of care delivered to clients is maintained. The division administration continues the work to strengthen partnerships, collaborate in the development of strategies for improvement efforts, and thus enhance the level of service provided to clients living in our communities. Grant opportunities were maximized by providing funding for outreach and emergency shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness in outlying areas. Regular meetings with Flood Bakersfield Ministries and the Telecare Bakersfield Recovery Station continue to occur for the purpose of identifying additional needs and resources that will benefit these agencies and populations they serve with a focus of determining opportunities to increase community education regarding these resources.

The Contracts and Contract Monitoring teams continue to focus on improving contracting and monitoring efforts. Gap analyses continue to be performed for processes related to requesting contracts, drafting agreements, monitoring procurement items from the development to completion phases, and ensuring the occurrence of requests and receipt of legal documents required to contract with the department to identify opportunities to implement efficiencies and thereby reduce the amount of time spent on procurement-related and monitoring tasks.

The Cultural Competence team continues to strengthen the collaboration with our key partners in the community by identifying gaps and developing improvement strategies with the goal of improving client's access to services. Recruitment efforts to Cultural Competence Resource Committee (CCRC) and the CCRC Subcommittee's created an increase of diverse members resulting in more targeted outreach and education in the community. For example, there have been several listening sessions with the African American/Black and the Hispanic/Latinx communities to increase awareness and reduce stigma in those communities. Department Supports Division staff joined the Kern Health Equity Partnership (KHEP) which is a multi-agency partnership to address 3 main components of health equity: Access to care, education and health literacy and socioeconomic status/poverty. Lastly, The Prevention and Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) teams joined DSD to improve upon the outreach in the community.

KernBHRS continues to utilize MHSA funding to support valuable services programs, and grants for our community. Our MHSA Annual Plan was submitted to Department of Healthcare Services and the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission highlighting multiple programs that provide services and support to adults and children throughout our community. KernBHRS held monthly public stakeholder meetings, both in-person and virtual in 2023. MHSA Coordinator/Administrator has been involved in several workgroup meetings to learn the Proposition 1 legislation and to create a preliminary plan for it.

Finance Division

The Finance Division operates under the co-leadership of the BHRS Finance Director and the BHRS Administrator for Finance. A highlight for the division has been the implementation of the new electronic health record to support rate-based Medi-Cal reimbursement. In addition to daily business activities, the division continues to support the many transformations required by CalAIM and by MHSA Modernization. The Credentialing team and the Training Services team are now included under the Finance umbrella.

Medical Services Division

Medical Services had its first Addiction Psychiatry Fellow in 7 years in 2023 and has successfully initiated a Medication Assisted Treatment Program with the SUD division. The team has hired two psychiatrists and added one Nurse Practitioner to the KernBHRS outpatient clinics. Of these Psychiatrists, one was a home-grown child trained Psychiatrist from our own UCLA- Kern Child and Adolescent Psychiatric partnership. The department's Zero Suicide Initiative was implemented within the SUD division and inpatient Hospitals. Medical Services has instituted a universal Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Kern County's Managed Care Plans to support client transitions into and out of Specialty Mental Health Services. We have held over 200 High Risk Eating Disorder Interdisciplinary Treatment Team meetings with community representatives to help keep clients with severe eating disorders healthy and out of inpatient hospitals.

Technology Services

In 2023, Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services began transitioning to the new Electronic Health Record (EHR) SmartCare from the legacy system Cerner. This implementation was a collaboration between Kern, CalMHSA, Streamline, and 22 other counties. In addition, the EHR had to be prepared for California Department of Health Care Services CalAIM and Payment Reform initiative. This implementation required hundreds of hours of department resources to prepare for the implementation on July 1st, 2023. In addition, it required all staff to begin training in May and June of 2023. These training courses were designed to prepare staff for the transition to the new EHR. Throughout the remainder of the year, frequent issues occurred that delayed staff in completing their documentation and required additional training or modifications to existing training as the vendor tried to stabilize the system. The EHR implementation staff were dedicated and responsive to the needs of our system users throughout this transition.

The Facilities teams assisted with the Site Refresh Project for site lobbies, conference rooms and doctor's offices in response to a recommendation from the state External Quality Review Organization (EQRO). Spaces were refreshed with paint, furnishings, artificial plants, and art are located at Kern Linkage, L. St., Oswell, NERAWC, SEBA, Commonwealth, and Stockdale. Each site had an open house to welcome visitors and highlight changes to the spaces.

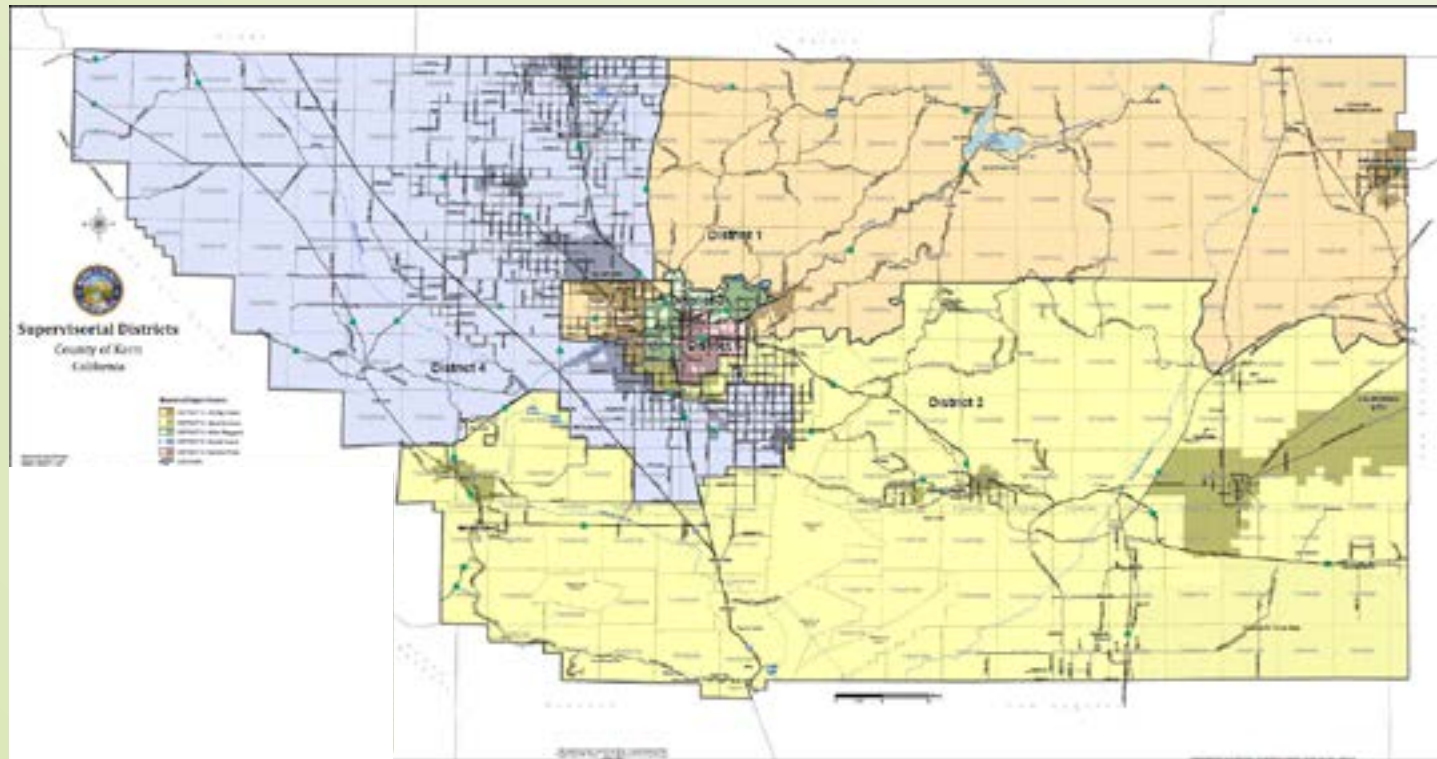
Patients' Rights Advocates

The Patients' Rights Advocates (PRA) office continues to utilize the grievance and appeal web application to increase ease and efficiency of timely processing of resolutions for client grievances and appeals. In 2023, we remained compliant with all DHCS regulations and maintained our goal by responding to 99.25% out of our 98% standard of all grievances and appeals within the appropriate timeframe. We have successfully implemented our grievance and appeal training to become a required annual electronic system wide training to all staff within our system and contract providers. We also offer coaching to KernBHRS staff and contract providers to increase participation in family and support persons in treatment.



Provider Network

KernBHR has a robust network of contracted providers that are committed to providing outstanding services throughout the county. The following pages show a map of Supervisorial Districts, a list of the Department's contracted service providers, and the corresponding district where services are provided throughout the county. Areas are color coded by Supervisorial Districts to identify areas served by specific providers. KernBHR values and appreciates our provider network, recognizing the quality work they provide. A brief orientation to their programs and services are included below.



- District 1 - Supervisor Phillip Peters
- District 2 - Zack Scrivner
- District 3 - Supervisor Jeff Flores
- District 4 - Supervisor David Couch
- District 5 - Supervisor Leticia Perez



Contract Providers - Fiscal Year 2022 - 23

Provider	Services Provided	Adult Mental Health	Children's Mental Health	Substance Use Disorders	Supervisor District by Location of Services				
					1	2	3	4	5
Aegis Treatment Center	Narcotic Treatment Program			x	x		x		x
American Health Systems	Narcotic Treatment Program			x					x
Bakersfield Behavioral Healthcare Hospital	Inpatient Hospitalization	x	x			x			
Bakersfield City School	Prepare U Curriculum		x						
Bakersfield Recovery Services	Detox, Outpatient Residential, Perinatal			x					x
Bethany Services, Inc.	Supportive Services	x							x
Cameron Youth Home Facilities	Short-term Residential		x					x	
Child Guidance Clinic	Outpatient		x		x		x	x	
Childnet Youth & Family Services	Short-term Residential		x		x	x	x	x	x
Clinica Sierra Vista	Outpatient	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
College Community Services	Outpatient, Drug Diversion Prevention	x	x	x	x	x			
Community Services Organization	Outpatient, Drug Diversion			x					x
Cornerstone	SUD Services in Tehachapi			x		x			
Cottage of Hope & Gratitude	Housing	x							x
Crestwood Behavioral Health	Long-term Inpatient Psychiatric Health Facilities Crisis Residential	x					x		x
Frese Hope House	Housing	x							x
Express Pharmacy	Prescription Services	x	x	x	x				
First 5 Kern	Help Me Grow Kern County		x		x	x	x	x	x
Flood Ministries	Outreach, Engagement & Linkage to Homelessness	x			x	x	x	x	x
Freedom House	Housing	x				x			x
Global Family Care Network	Short-term Residential		x					x	
Golden Empire Affordable Housing	Housing	x	x				x		
Good Samaritan Hospital	Geropsychiatric Inpatient Hospitalization	x					x		
Henrietta Weill Child Guidance Clinic, Inc.	Outpatient Services		x		x		x	x	x
Heritage Living Inc.	Housing	x						x	
KernBHR (Shown for Demonstration Purposes - Not Contracted)	Outpatient, Crisis, Prevention Drug Diversion	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Kern Bridges Youth Homes	Housing		x			x			
Kern County Hispanic Commission	Housing			x			x		
Kern Medical Hospital	Inpatient Hospitalization	x					x		
Koinonia Family Services	Foster Youth		x		x	x	x	x	x
La Paz	Residential Housing for Treatment	x		x					
Lost Hills School District	Prepare U Curriculum		x					x	
Mental Health Systems, Inc.	Outpatient	x					x		
Mercy House Living Centers	Housing	x							x
New Start Youth Facility	Short-term Residential		x				x		
North Chester Pharmacy	Prescription Services	x	x	x			x		
S.T.E.P.S.	Drinking Driver Program Outpatient			x			x		
Sierra Sands Unified School District	Care Coordination for High-Risk Students		x		x				
Stewards, Inc.	Representative Payee	x							x
Stockdale Boys Center	Short-term Residential		x		x				



Contract Providers - Fiscal Year 2022 - 23

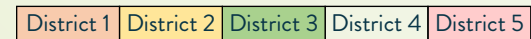
Provider	Services Provided	Adult Mental Health	Children's Mental Health	Substance Use Disorders	Supervisor District by Location of Services				
					1	2	3	4	5
Sycamore Healthcare	Residential	x						x	x
Taft Union High School	Prepare U Curriculum		x				x		
Telecare Corporation	Crisis Stabilization								
	Sobering Station	x	x	x				x	
The Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity	LGBTQ+ counseling and supportive services	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Third Tradition Sober Living	Housing		x			x			
Unicorn Gardens	Short-term Residential		x						x
Wasco Union High School District	SUD Services for High Risk Youth		x	x				x	
Westcare California	Short-term Residential			x			x		
Your Drug Store, Inc.	Prescription Services	x	x	x			x		
Youth Quest Guidance Center	Short-term Residential		x			x			



Spotlight on Providers



Clinica Sierra Vista



Clinica Sierra Vista continues to work towards seamless integration of behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, healthcare for the homeless, and WIC services with primary care services provided in our federally qualified health centers. We utilize a collaborative care model in two community health center sites in Kern. At these sites, the Behavioral Health Provider (BHP), partners with the Primary Care Provider (PCP) to provide early intervention to patients with depressive symptoms that were identified by a PHQ9 score over 10. In this model, the BHP and PCP provide behavioral activation interventions while consulting with a psychiatrist on a weekly basis where medication management needs are identified. This model allows for early intervention within the primary health care setting, preventing the need for more intensive services, as well as removing barriers, such as stigma, to behavioral health treatment. In addition, we continue to utilize Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT services) at two community health center sites to assist individuals who struggle with opioid addiction to complement the whole person care that Clinica Sierra Vista offers in our community health centers.

Behavioral health is an integral part of motivating behavior and positive health outcomes in specialty as well as primary and substance use disorder care. Quality-driven services help mitigate the many social determinants of health, facilitate resilience and recovery from traumatic experience, and abide the promise of seeing our patients from a holistic perspective where behavior change is recognized as a primary means to better mind and body health outcomes.

It is our distinct pleasure and honor to be entrusted with the care, treatment, and services for thousands of clients through the course of tens of thousands of encounters each year at low to no cost to the patient. Our coordinated system of care for serving mild-moderate through severe and persistent mental health concerns, alongside three Drug Medi-Cal certified substance disorder treatment, demands a deliberate and well-orchestrated relationship between our patients, their primary care and behavioral health providers, and the communities where we practice.

We work with Mental Health Plan in rural, farm worker communities where our familiarity and understanding of the language, culture and hardships of poverty and rural life resonate with our clientele. We also proudly serve children and adults through specialty mental health programs in

South Central Bakersfield. Services are provided to children through school, home, and family engagement, while adults are provided therapy, case management, and psychiatry services as part of the adult system of care. Ebony Counseling Center is co-located with our adult team, and we provide SUD services to adolescents as well as adults.

We are proud of our commitment to quality service on behalf of the thousands of Behavioral Health & Recovery Services members and look forward to continuing a reliable, innovative, and best practice care model in partnership with BHRS for many years to come.



College Community Services

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

College Community Services (CCS) is a subsidiary of Pathways, one of the largest national providers specializing in accessible, evidence and outcome-based mental health and substance use services. Our core competencies include a national network of recovery focused community-based behavioral health service delivery systems. Nationwide, Pathways delivers a full spectrum of behavioral health care in 18 U.S. States and the District of Columbia and serves more than 54,000 unduplicated behavioral health consumers every year via home-based and community-based services. At Pathways, we are a recovery focused organization that values People. We are Passionate about what we do, and we strive to provide the best Service possible.

CCS has been providing a comprehensive continuum of behavioral health and substance use disorder services for children, youth, adults, and families in Kern County since 1996. Our mission is to provide and advocate for recovery-focused, accessible, and effective community-based services that promote hope and resiliency. We currently provide outpatient services to the communities of Bakersfield, Wasco, Taft, Lake Isabella, Ridgecrest, Tehachapi, Mojave, and surrounding areas. In Kern County, CCS operates seven outpatient adult behavioral health programs, six outpatient children’s behavioral health programs, and six outpatient substance use disorder (SUD) programs. Our SUD programs also offer adolescent outpatient SUD services, as well as a behavioral health program at Camp Erwin Owens, and two Consumer Family Learning Centers. CCS offers personalized recovery-oriented treatment planning, trauma-informed care, co-occurring capable services, and evidence-based treatment to meet individualized needs. We utilize a multidisciplinary treatment team approach to service delivery which offers a network of service providers that best meets the needs of the individuals and families being served. CCS strives to provide strength-based solutions in partnership with clients, their families, and local partner agencies to improve overall life functioning. The use of field-based technologies enhances treatment by facilitating off-site and in-home service delivery. Based in the community and driven by our consumers, all are designed to meet individual linguistic and cultural needs. CCS staff employ a strength-based, family-centered approach that is highly collaborative and consistent with Behavioral Health & Recovery Services.



Special Treatment Education & Prevention Services

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

STEPS has been a proud partner with Kern Behavioral Health & Recovery Services for a number of years. Initially STEPS provided only DUI services but has now expanded to provide outpatient drug-free services in both regular outpatient (1.0) as well as intensive outpatient services (2.1).

Both of our outpatient drug-free programs use nationally recognized, evidence-based practices in the treatment of our patients. We perform screening, assessments, diagnosis, drug testing, individual and group therapy. We coordinate with other county and state agencies to provide mental and physical health assessments. We work to coordinate transfers for care to either higher or lower levels of care based on ongoing assessment and progress.

We work closely with county and state agencies to provide various length DUI programs. DUI services for minors with our Minors Alcohol and Drug Education Program (MAADEP) program. Our “Get Your License Back” program, in cooperation with the Community Corrections Partnership helps parolees obtain a legal driver’s license.

STEPS has two sites in metropolitan Bakersfield that are located to better assist the community. Our efforts allow us the opportunity to offer adults multiple avenues to recovery, and youth a healthier way to live. Ultimately, Kern County benefits in a healthier, safer community and our residents become more productive citizens.



Community Service Organization

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

Community Service Organization, Behavioral Health Programs provides level 1.0 Outpatient, level 2.1 Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) services, domestic violence, anger management classes, and PC 1000 education at our Brotherhood Center in metro Bakersfield. We proudly provide space for weekly Narcotics Anonymous meetings for clients. CSO Behavioral Health Programs is a non-profit organization that has been in operation for the past 40 years.

Freedom House

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

Freedom House and Terra Lynn are operated by Lynn Huckaby and Danette Reynolds. For over 20 years, this husband and wife team have provided a living environment that supports individuals in recovery for individuals 18 and older. Freedom House has partnered with many agencies serving the behavioral health and criminal justice population. The organization is in its second three-year contract for providing services to early release offenders with a substance use disorder under the AB109 program and is in the third multi-year contract the County of Kern to provide Specialty Transitional Housing Services for a variety of populations with behavioral health and substance use challenges. Between the Men’s and Women’s homes, there are 108 beds. The Huckabys have a very personal reason to work with our most vulnerable populations and are grateful to be able to continue serving the community. Although maintaining their homes in such high standards is not always easy, they feel it is an absolute honor to serve this community where they were born and raised.



Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

The Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic is a private non-profit, outpatient mental health center serving adults, children, and families since 1946. The Clinic uses evidenced based practices and treatment theories to provide a variety of behavioral health and substance abuse services to empower parents with the tools and techniques needed to guide their children through emotional and behavior difficulties.

Families who reside in Delano/McFarland, north Bakersfield, and west Bakersfield may receive a full array of services including individual, family, and group therapy, Therapeutic Behavioral Services, and crisis intervention. Services are provided in the client's home, at school, in the community or wherever the family feels most comfortable. Clinics also serve children and adolescents who have experienced various forms of abuse, neglect, or other traumatic events. A psychiatrist and psychiatric nurse practitioner are available to provide medication support services, as needed. All services are provided in a bilingual, culturally appropriate environment.



Hispanic Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

The Kern County Hispanic Commission on Alcohol and Drugs (KCHC) outpatient recovery offers levels of services based on the client's needs. Our licensed clinical staff is focused on helping the client to successfully achieve their goals of abstinence from substance use. The use of the ASAM Criteria helps identify the needs of the client, treatment planning identifies the appropriate services and referral to meet the best needs of our clients. We offer level outpatient 1.0 and 2.1 services. A client who is placed as a level 1.0 may receive services up to nine hours per week; the client's needs determine the scheduling of services for the client. A client placed as a 2.1 is attending our intensive outpatient services with a minimum of nine hours per week with a maximum of 19 hours per week. This is an option for those individuals who may be hesitant to enroll in a residential treatment program or on a waiting list for a residential program.

Our hours of operation are 7:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday through Thursday, Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Saturday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The individualized client schedule is to help make reaching treatment goals and objectives less stressful to obtain success. Services may range from three to six months and longer if needed. Group services are tailored to meet the needs of clients.

KCHC is open to daily walk-ins who are provided a secure and safe location to complete a screening with the Gateway Team. Our clients are also informed of the guidelines and process to obtain a food basket form KCHC if needed.



Cottage of Hope & Gratitude Sober Living

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

The Kern County Hispanic Commission on Alcohol and Drugs (KCHC) outpatient recovery offers levels of services based on the client's needs. Our licensed clinical staff is focused on helping the client to successfully achieve their goals of abstinence from substance use. The use of the ASAM Criteria helps identify the needs of the client, treatment planning identifies the appropriate services and referral to meet the best needs of our clients. We offer level outpatient 1.0 and 2.1 services. A client who is placed as a level 1.0 may receive services up to nine hours per week; the client's needs determine the scheduling of services for the client. A client placed as a 2.1 is attending our intensive outpatient services with a minimum of nine hours per week with a maximum of 19 hours per week. This is an option for those individuals who may be hesitant to enroll in a residential treatment program or on a waiting list for a residential program.

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Bakersfield Recovery Services, Inc.

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

Bakersfield Recovery Services (BRS) has been improving its facilities by adding additional space not only for clients but for our professional staff to conduct better quality of services in a more comfortable environment. BRS has recently signed on a new medical director, Dr. Jasmeet Bains, who is very eager to provide oversight as well as help our agency in expanding the services available to our participants. We continue to provide services at Lincoln Street Retreat (perinatal residential), Capistrano Community for Women (women's residential), Jason's Retreat (men's residential), and at our outpatient facility as well. Our goal is to assist others in making positive changes in their lives and to reunite them with their families. We continue to seek new ideas to help the company grow so that we can better assist our clientele. BRS has turned its focus to more community-based outreach work such as assisting each month in "Restoration Wednesday", a project that feeds underserved individuals and families. Additionally, BRS is a local leader in Narcan distribution, awareness, and training efforts as a response to the nationwide fentanyl crisis. We also have been working with other local agencies, such as law enforcement and other mental health providers, on community education events that cover the dangers of fentanyl overdose/poisoning. BRS has a newly redesigned webpage and updated social media pages. All were developed to reach and promote our numerous services to the community.



Crestwood Behavioral Health of Bakersfield

District 1 | District 2 | **District 3** | District 4 | District 5

Crestwood has been providing residential mental health recovery services to adults ages 18 to 62 in Bakersfield since 1998. The Bridge is a 15 bed Adult Residential Facility, and the Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) is a 16-bed designated 5150 facility. Both facilities are innovative programs based on Crestwood’s commitment to providing mental health clients a continuum of care that puts them on the road to recovery. Crestwood operates Freise Hope House, a 15-bed crisis residential facility with over 50% peer staff. At our 55-bed Mental Health Rehabilitation Facility (MHRC), community integration and dual recovery are key tenets. Community reintegration is designed for those clients who need help developing some of the basic life skills that will assist them when returning to their communities. All clients, regardless of their area of focus, participate in a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) as well as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), an evidenced-based practice used to treat clients with borderline personality disorder. Welcome to Crestwood ...with us you are family!



Crestwood Behavioral Health of Bakersfield

District 1 | District 2 | **District 3** | District 4 | District 5

The mission of ChildNet Youth and Family Services is to provide safe homes, education and counseling to vulnerable children and families. Our program philosophy reinforces personal responsibility and the need for a strong family unit. ChildNet Youth and Family Services was founded in 1970 by a group of Long Beach civic leaders whose goal was to foster the social, emotional, and educational development of troubled and disadvantaged youth. It has since grown from a single youth home that served an average of 100 boys annually to an organization with seven locations covering five counties, serving upwards of 7,850 clients annually. ChildNet is contracted to provide adjunctive mental health services that will include Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) and will provide skill building interventions while the Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services geographical service area contracted provider provides the individual and family therapy to the client. The TFC clinician supports the child and the resource/foster family in collaborative skill building in conjunction with the geographical provider serving the mental health diagnosis of the client. TFC is a clinical intervention, which includes placement in specifically trained resource/foster homes, for youth in foster care with severe mental, emotional, or behavioral health needs. Caregivers are trained in specialized skills to address emotional, behavioral, and relational needs of individual youth in their care and are supported and monitored toward measurable goals by TFC professionals. The TFC parent serves as a key participant in the therapeutic treatment process of the or youth. The TFC parent will provide trauma-informed interventions that are medically necessary for the child or youth. The specialty mental health service activities provided through the TFC service model assist the child or youth to achieve client plan goals and objectives; improve functioning and well-being; and help the child or youth to remain in a family-like home in a community setting, thereby avoiding residential, inpatient, or institutional care.



Sycamore Healthcare, Inc.

District 1 | District 2 | **District 3** | District 4 | District 5

Sycamore Healthcare operates two assisted living facilities for the 18- to 59-year-old population in Kern County. Our Sandpiper facility is a six-bed non-ambulatory and ambulatory facility for female clients, located at 2301 Sandpiper Road in Bakersfield. Sycamore 17th is a six-bed facility for ambulatory males located at 2720 17th Street in Bakersfield. Sycamore Healthcare provides specific individualized plans of care focused on strengthening independent living skills. Our clients also have access to county services such as CFLC and local learning establishments in our community. Our mission is that all clients learn and maintain the ability to safely live and thrive in a less restrictive homelike environment and to manage their disease with assistance for the long term.



Good Samaritan Hospital

District 1 | District 2 | **District 3** | District 4 | District 5

Good Samaritan Hospital is an essential access community mental healthcare organization whose mission is to provide safe, effective, and efficient psychiatric services in a caring manner. Our services include inpatient psychiatric care for adults, inpatient chemical detoxification services, and intensive outpatient services with specialty tracks in mental health, chemical dependency, or those who have a dual diagnosis. In addition to the above, this facility is also able to accommodate psychiatric clients who are medically compromised. The goal of our inpatient program is to provide intensive services designed to stabilize acute psychiatric illness.



Aegis Treatment Centers, LLC

District 1 | District 2 | **District 3** | District 4 | District 5

Aegis operates 36 treatment centers throughout California, making Aegis one of the state’s largest networks of opioid treatment programs. Aegis operates five locations in Kern County, three in Bakersfield, and one in each city of Delano and Ridgecrest.

Aegis specializes in treating opioid use disorder and successfully treats individuals through an evidence-based and scientific approach, Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT). MAT combines the use of FDA-approved medications buprenorphine, methadone, or naltrexone with counseling and behavioral therapies to provide a whole-person approach to treating substance use disorders. These medications, combined with evidence-based curricula, and integration of services specific to the person’s needs, give the individual the highest chance for success. An individual who receives treatment with Aegis can expect treatment to be personal and individualized. A patient receives a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment by an Aegis physician at admission. Following this admission process, and in conjunction with the individual and treatment team, a personalized treatment plan is put in place to address the individual’s specific clinical diagnosis. During recovery, patients move forward at their own pace, aiming for short-term goals and long-term success. Aegis encourages patients to take charge of their health and their future. That is why individual and group counseling are at the heart of the Aegis program.

Aegis is a subsidiary of Pinnacle Treatment Centers, a recognized leader in comprehensive substance use services serving over 32,000 patients daily in over 115 locations across eight states (Indiana, Kentucky, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, California and Georgia). Pinnacle offers our patients with a true full continuum of care from detox and residential treatment to Medication Assisted Treatment. Although not all locations provide all levels of care, our continuum of care includes:

- Medically-monitored detoxification/withdrawal management
- Inpatient/residential
- Partial hospitalization/partial care
- Intensive outpatient
- General outpatient programming
- Medication Assisted Treatment



Mental Health Systems, Inc.

District 1 | District 2 | **District 3** | District 4 | District 5

Mental Health Systems (MHS) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1978 to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities facing substance abuse and behavioral health challenges. MHS ACTION Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) is a Full-Service Partnership that provides 24-hour community-based treatment for serious and persistent mentally ill (SPMI) individuals, including those with a criminogenic background. These individuals often have a lengthy history of mental health and have not responded well to traditional outpatient services. MHS ACTION provides the highest level of care available for outpatient treatment. By nature of the program, the ACT team may meet with clients several times per week to maintain engagement in treatment and progress towards their goals. All clients are eligible to receive medication management and monitoring, therapy including Dialectical Behavior Therapy, group therapy, drug and alcohol counseling, case management, and housing assistance. Our culturally sensitive, gender-responsive services promote mental wellness and independent living. They are designed to meet the individual needs of each client, which include services to family and their support systems. Within the last year, MHS ACTION has served over 160 clients, which include 75 AB109 clients and 94 MHSA clients. Clients are referred through various resources, including hospitals, jails, the Kern Linkage Program, Mary K. Shell Access Center, and other outside agencies.



Mental Health Systems, Inc.

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | **District 5**

American Health Services is an Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) providing medication-assisted treatment (MAT) throughout California and Texas. These programs offer methadone and buprenorphine, supported by counseling and services necessary to recovery for opioid addiction.

OTPs have been proven to be clinically effective for the treatment of opioid use disorder. For more than 50 years, methadone has been considered successful for medication-assisted treatment. The benefits of outpatient treatment services at American health Services include management of withdrawal symptoms, decreased rate of relapse, decreased illicit opiate use, decreased illegal activity, improved health, improved pregnancy/parenting outcomes, strengthened recovery supports systems, and improvement the ability to obtain/maintain employment.

While medication and counseling are the essential elements of an opioid treatment program, a number of additional recovery services are provided to our patients that include the following supportive services: medical screening, coordinated treatment for pregnant patients, supportive discharge planning, addiction/relapse prevention education, and linkage with community referrals.

American Health Services is proudly serving over 400 patients in Bakersfield. Services are also available for East Kern residents at our Palmdale location. Our treatment team embraces the many pathways to treatment and strives to ensure excellent access, efficiency, effectiveness and satisfaction of our patients and other stakeholders.



Telecare Corporation

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | **District 5**

Telecare Corporation partners with BHRS to provide much needed services to the East Kern County region, operating a Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) in Ridgecrest. The CSU operates 24/7 and provides services to individuals of all ages experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Services include crisis stabilization using evidence-based practices, skills building, linkage to family and community supports as well as linkage to ongoing behavioral health services. In addition, Telecare operates a Recovery in Bakersfield. The Recovery Stations will provide screening, access, and linkage to care for individuals presenting with co-occurring mental illness and substance use needs. The Recovery Station model integrates elements of a sobering station with the use of peer staffing and an emphasis on beginning recovery from mental illness and substance use disorders.



Bakersfield Behavioral Healthcare Hospital

District 1 | **District 2** | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

Bakersfield Behavioral Healthcare Hospital is an acute psychiatric 90-bed facility, serving all of Kern County. BBHH offers specialized units for children, adolescents and adults with mental/behavioral health and/or substance abuse concerns. BBHH's Stepping Stones also offers a variety of the same therapeutic programs for adolescents and adults but in an outpatient setting. Stepping Stones offers two programs to meet the needs of those we serve: intensive outpatient or a partial hospitalization program.



Bakersfield Behavioral Healthcare Hospital

District 1 | District 2 | District 3 | District 4 | District 5

Tarzana Treatment Centers youth Substance Use Disorder (SUD) residential program is designed to treat youth, ages 12 to 17, who need SUD and/or co-occurring disorders treatment. The program is located in the city of Lancaster in the County of Los Angeles and is licensed by the State/County and accredited by The Joint Commission. The program treats Kern youth who meet medical necessity criteria for ASAM 3.5 and adults meeting criteria for ASAM 3.3 and ASAM 3.2 WM. The program is voluntary, and as such, the youth must be willing to enter the program. The treatment team is committed to helping youth develop their strengths, learn how to manage their day-to-day lives, and to understand the logical consequences of their decisions and behaviors. The primary treatment team is comprised of psychiatrist, psychologists, licensed mental health therapist, case managers, counselors and recovery support staff.

The goal of the youth treatment program is to provide youth with the skills necessary to remain drug/alcohol free and to thrive in a less restrictive environment upon discharge. The treatment team believes in youth empowerment and seeks to actively engage youth in their care. Treatment includes:

- Individual, family, and group counseling
- Independent Study through the Antelope Valley (AV) Unified School District
- 12-Step and patient education
- Social activities designed to teach enjoyment in activities without the use of drugs and or alcohol
- Case management and linkage to outpatient services prior to discharge from the residential program



WestCare California, Inc.

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
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WestCare California, Inc.'s Bakersfield Men's Residential programs provides co-occurring drug and/or alcohol addiction treatment services in a safe and supportive environment that is grounded in the fundamental belief that services need to be person-centered and focused on wellness and recovery. These programs are designed to meet the person where they are in their stage of recovery with an emphasis on understanding the unique mental, emotional, and social factors that influence their drug and/or alcohol use. Residential treatment offers men an environment where they can focus on their recovery without the distractions of everyday life.

Services provided to adults include comprehensive assessments, individual and group counseling including mental health and substance use disorder education classes, relapse-prevention, anger management, criminal thinking, parenting, introduction to community-based support services, optional weekly onsite and community-based 12-Step meetings, HIV/AIDS education, vocational skills development, employment readiness and family relations and counseling. WestCare uses evidence-based curricula in our programs provided by trained, supportive, and credentialed staff to assist the people we serve in setting the foundation for recovery. This foundation will help those served understand their substance use disorder, improve their self-esteem, and make positive choices as well as set and obtain goals. The focus and intensity of residential treatment is modified to accommodate the realistic and practical needs of each person with lengths of stay from 30 to 180 days. A determination of the intensiveness of treatment needed is made at initial assessment and is modified to accommodate the needs of each person. WestCare welcomes family involvement in all phases of our programming.

Data & Reports



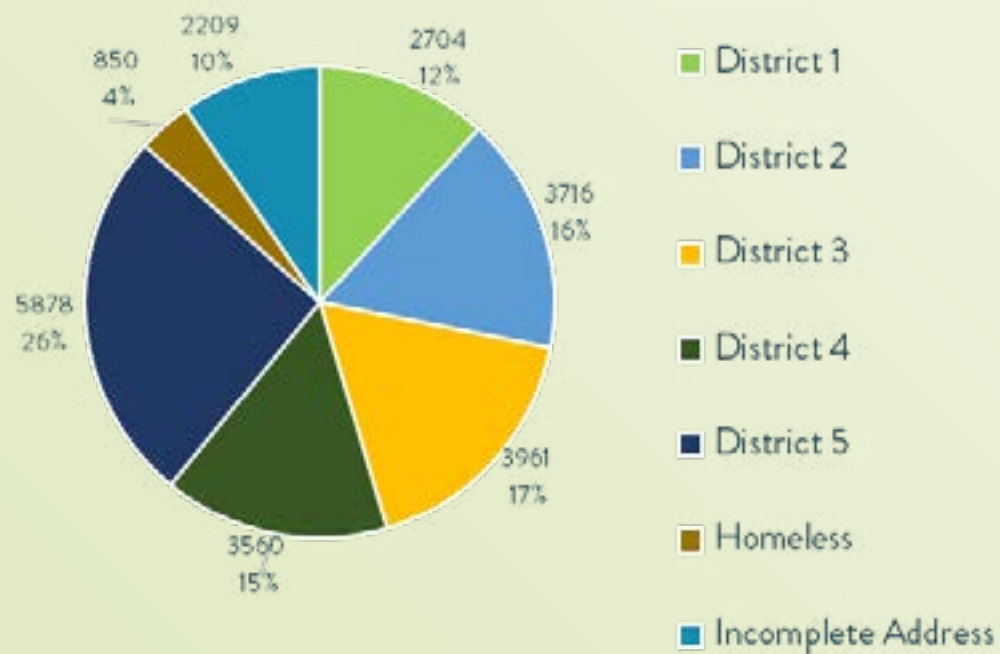
Consumer Demographics

The following is information about Mental Health (MH) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) consumers, including graphs of the district in which they live, where they receive services, and the ethnicity of individuals served. While the Supervisorial Districts have approximately equal populations, District 5 has the largest number of persons served with centralized services in Bakersfield such as Kern Medical, the Mary K. Shell Mental Health Clinic, and substance use programs. It is important to note that the services provided in any one of the districts are available to all county residents.

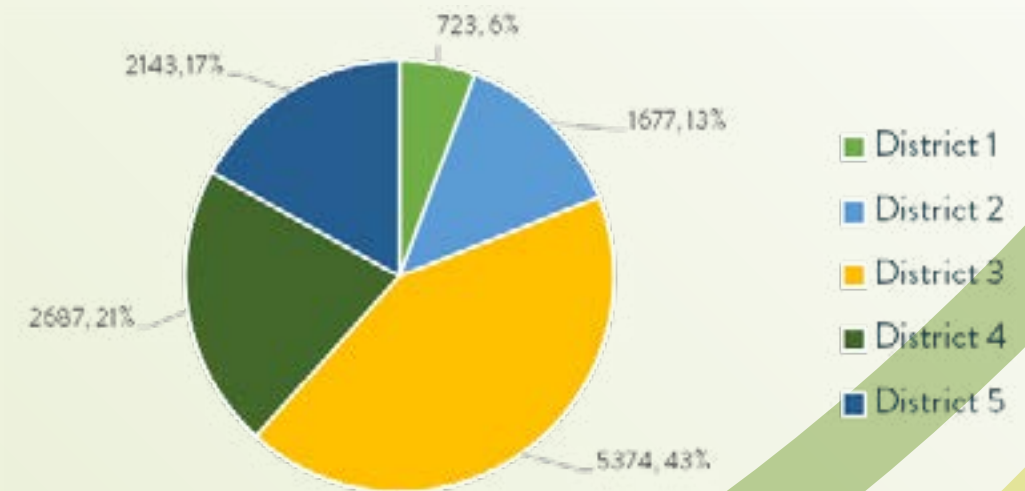




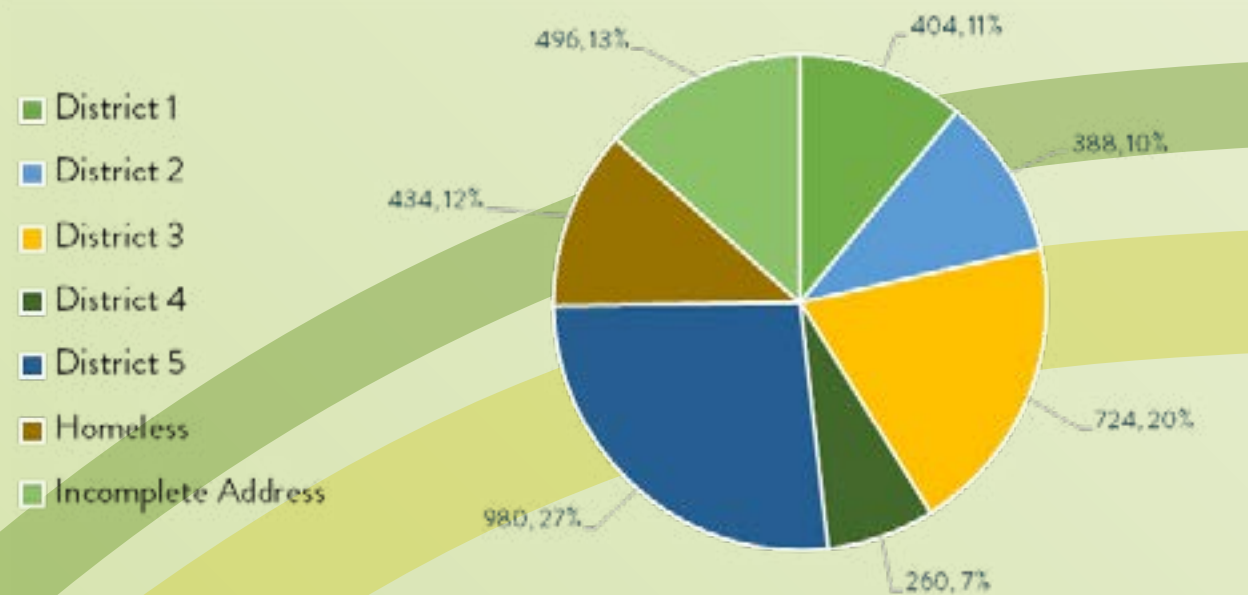
Mental Health Clients Residence



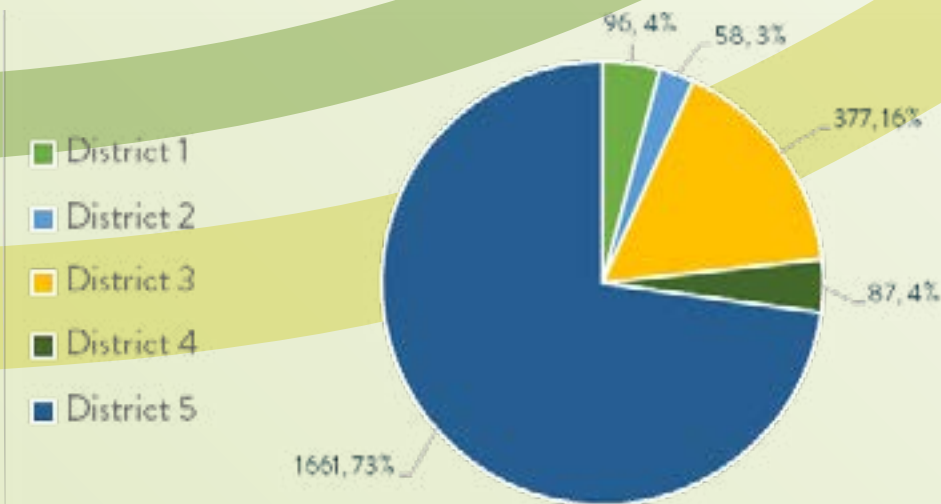
Mental Health Location of Services Received



SUD Clients Residence

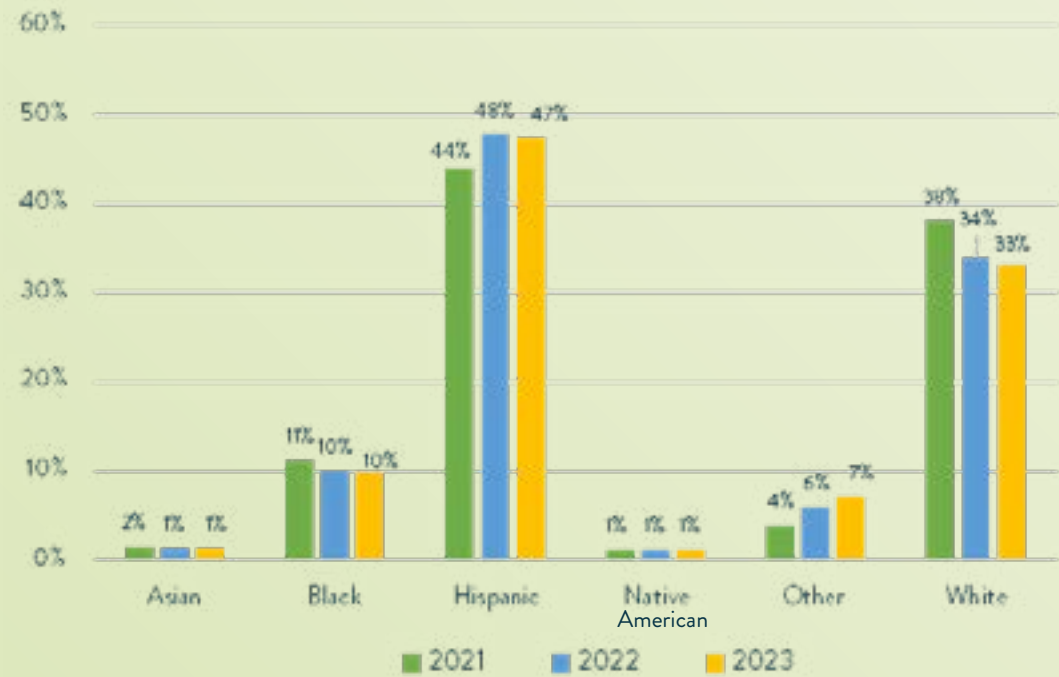


SUD Clients Location of Services Received

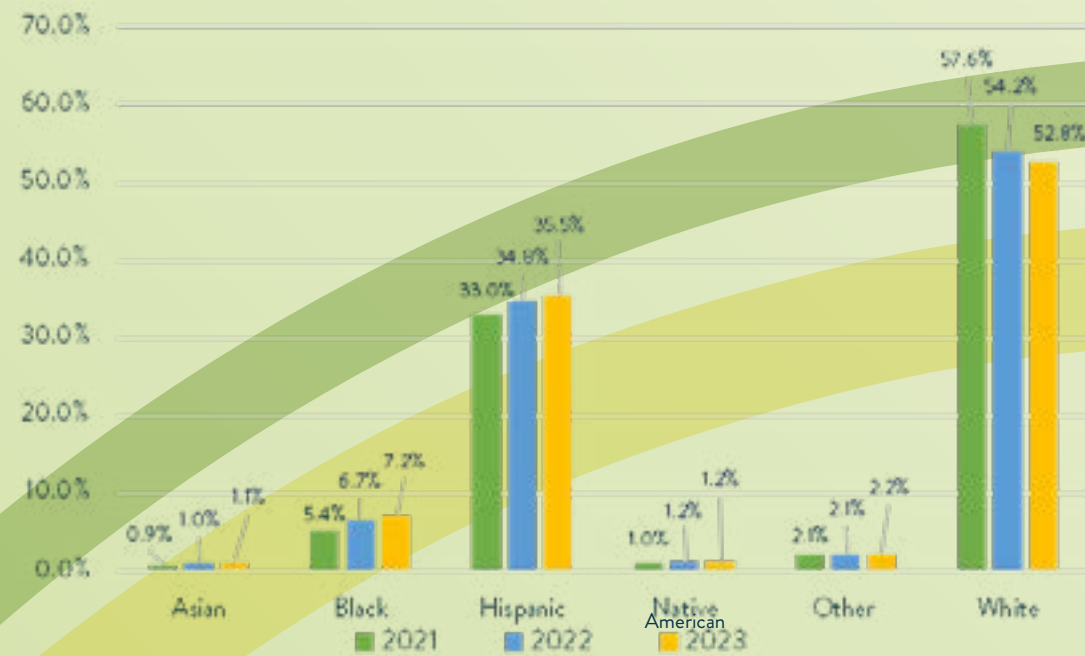




Ethnicity of Individuals Served Mental Health



Ethnicity of Individuals Served SUD



Program Highlights

Shelter Services

Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (KernBHRS) Homeless Adult Team (HAT) is identified as one of California's Full-Service Partnership (FSP) and intensive services programs who are recovery oriented and offer comprehensive mental health services. HAT specializes in a targeted population such as adult homeless individuals (or at risk of becoming homeless) with severe mental illness, criminal justice involvement, experience repeat psychiatric hospitalizations, and possibly undocumented. FSP and HAT enrollment is contingent upon potential clients meeting FSP eligibility criteria, including focal population and level-of-service requirements (MH assessment LEVEL 3 specialty services finding).



HAT utilizes Evidence Based Practice interventions and approaches to help individuals learn behavioral techniques to help manage their mental health illness and quality of life. HAT ensures that each treatment plan is customized and appropriate for mental health and physical care needs. Additionally, services may include transportation to appointments, assist with housing, establish a primary care provider, provide help with filling out forms and applications, and navigate services with outside agencies. HAT works with the Benefits Acquisition Team (BAT) to help individuals apply for and monitor Social Security benefit applications. HAT offers Peer Support staff to help normalize and validate individuals' challenges, experiences and receive encouragement and support to play an active role in their recovery.

HAT adopts a mindset of "doing whatever it takes" to help individuals on their path to recovery and wellness by offering outreach and engagement. HAT staff are located at various sites including Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK), M Street Navigation Center, Mercy House, Brundage Lane Navigation Center, The Mission at Kern County, Open Door Network, and FLOOD. This allows HAT to be a point of entry for the identification of individuals who are already receiving mental health services and individuals that continue to experience recidivism with homelessness and/or crisis utilization, due to need of additional support and intensive services needs including screening and assessment to determine appropriateness of services.





Contingency Management and MAT

The SUD Outpatient Treatment Team is one of the two county operated substance use disorder treatment programs within our DMC-ODS network. This small but mighty team of 11 has several distinct programs that provide evidence-based care to adults and adolescents in Bakersfield. The team has been providing outpatient SUD services to monolingual Spanish speakers that have not been eligible for Medi-Cal until January of 2024. This population has been quite dedicated to their services, with excellent attendance and participation. The team also serves adolescents at their central location on L St in addition to the Kelly Blanton Educational Center and is available to respond to requests for assistance at the Dream Center, Kern county's only one-stop resource center for current and former foster youth up to the age of 25. Assisting the adolescent population has been challenging, since substance use trends have shifted in recent years with opioid and fentanyl use on the rise, unfortunately.

In May of 2023, the SUD Outpatient Treatment Team launched the Recovery Incentives Program, which provides gift cards of increasing value to those that provide negative urine drug tests. This innovative program is intended to assist those with a stimulant use disorder, and it is an evidence-based intervention to ensure that more individuals can remain in outpatient treatment longer and reap the benefits of counseling for substance use. This program was the third to launch in the state and has already had 6 individuals complete the entire 24-week program successfully. To date, 86% of the urine drug tests administered for this program have been stimulant-free.



In July of 2023, a new program was launched at the site of this program to provide medication assisted treatment to those with an opioid use disorder. This program, created in partnership with the Medical Services division and the Kern Medical Addiction Psychiatry Fellowship program, adds physicians and nurses to the clinic to provide prescriptions for buprenorphine, an opioid partial agonist that diminishes the effects of physical dependency to opioids (such as withdrawal symptoms and cravings). The SUD Outpatient Treatment team is growing to provide additional case management support to those utilizing these services. With all these program elements in operation, the SUD Outpatient Treatment Team will continue to provide excellent quality of care to adolescent and adult Medi-Cal members within our community.



Transitional Age Youth

The Transition Age Youth (TAY) team has worked collaboratively for many years with several TAY providers to provide a safety net of support for the most vulnerable youth in our county. This partnership between the Kern County Network for Children at the Dream Center, Department of Human Services, Probation Department, and various nonprofit organizations has supported youth with securing and maintaining stable permanent housing, employment, improving access to community resources, and transitioning to adulthood. The TAY team provides intensive care coordination with partners to ensure that the youth are learning concrete life skills that they can apply to achieve their goals. Over the past year, several youth have improved their mental health, obtained stable permanent housing, and reduced their reliance on substances to cope with stressors. The community-based support has been essential to improving outcomes for several unhoused youth. Frequently, when there is an issue the entire TAY workgroup comes together to problem solve how to best support our mutual youth so that we can enhance the quality of care. As the saying goes, "It takes a village."





EHR Committee

In 2023, Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services began the transition from its legacy system to the new EHR SmartCare. This took an extreme number of resources to facilitate. At the peak of the implementation the team consisted of 106 people available for support of the project. This implementation impacted over 1200 users directly as well as the whole department who had to support this process. We had over 20 different training sites that provided up to 32 hours of training in the month of June. The system launched in July, and this team was required to provide 24/7 support to the system. Staff on this team spent months together in a few rooms working together to ensure we were able to provide as effective an implementation as possible. Throughout the remainder of the year, these same staff supported changes to the system, new training, providing support, and correcting issues. In total, thousands of hours were devoted to this project and because of the resources that were devoted to its success, the department is ahead of other counties in regards to many aspects.

The EHR teams were managed by the following team leads included in this picture wearing our signature “Robust” hats which was our motto to make each aspect of our EHR implementation robust.



Site Refresh Project Team

One significant project of 2023 was the Site Refresh. The Site Refresh Project Team, working with our Facilities staff transformed more than a dozen sites throughout our system of care this year. The goal of this project was to modernize and refresh our clinics to provide warm and welcoming environments for our clients to visit.

Most of our internal program locations are rented spaces and some are county owned buildings. Many of these spaces had not been updated for several years, and had stained carpet, outdated and mismatched furnishings, marked walls, and rooms filled with old supplies and broken equipment.

The Site Refresh Project took months to plan and coordinate. It began by identifying an available budget and a walkthrough of the sites to identify areas for improvement. Discussions with the staff at each site followed, to evaluate the use of the spaces. The Refresh Team wanted to ensure the changes would support the planned use of the spaces and the furnishings were also tailored to fit.



Spring Cleaning Day was announced, and truckloads of old broken furnishings and equipment were picked up from each location. From there, painting was scheduled, furnishings and wall hangings were selected and ordered, and the Facilities staff and the Refresh Project Team got to work setting up these spaces. The results were fresh, new spaces where staff can be proud to work, and the clientele feel welcome. These spaces now reflect the quality of services individuals can expect to receive from our clinics. Check out some of the before and after pictures highlighting the work and a big thank you to all the staff involved in this project.

