

**KERN COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

March 23, 2026

5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

In Person: 2001 28<sup>th</sup> Street- 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Training Room**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Michael Bryant (Dist. 3) – Chair

Bryson Gholston (Dist. 3) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair

Sonia Silva (Dist. 2)

BreAnne Patterson (Dist. 4) Parliamentarian – *Absent*Jeff Burdick (Dist. 1) – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair - *Absent*Tiara King (Dist. 2) - *Removed*

Michael Herrera (Dist. 1)

Ishmeet Singh (Dist. 2) - *Absent*

LaShawna Stowe (Dist. 4)

Maria Gonzalez – BHB Coordinator

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Priscilla Sanchez

**KERNBHRS STAFF:** Jessica Armstrong (BHRS Deputy Director), Robin Taylor (BHRS Deputy Director), Heather Hornibrook (BHRS Deputy Director), Alison Burrowes (BHRS Director), Tonya Maddox (Crisis Services Administration), Lesleigh Davis (Quality Improvement Division Administration).

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Michael Bryant, Chair, welcomed everyone; each board member introduced themselves.
2. **Establish Quorum:** Present (5) *Quorum was not established.*
3. **Approval of Draft Minutes:**
  - January 26, 2026 and February 23, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes: *Quorum was not established. Deferred to April 23, 2026.*
4. **Presentation(s):** Quality Improvement Division – Lesleigh Davis
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **Unfinished Business**

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- Emergency action to remove Board Member (Tiara King). MOTION by Michael Herrera and SECONED by Bryson Gholston. ALL AYES: MOTION PASSED

## **7. New Business – Michael Byant**

- **Board member district reorganization**

- Michael Herrera, Michael Bryant, and BreAnne Patterson were reappointed with terms expiring December 31, 2028.
- Supervisor Hartge was appointed to the board, with Flores designated as alternate.

## **1. Chair Report – Michael Bryant**

- Approval of the minutes is deferred to the next meeting.
- The Chair declared an emergency action to consider the removal of Tiara King from the board, citing multiple unsuccessful contact attempts, a recommendation from the Board of Supervisors, and her absence for several months.

## **2. KernBHRS Administrative Services – Lesleigh Davis on behalf of Heather Hornibrook, Deputy Director**

- **Clinical Plan Services**

- Preparations are underway for May is Mental Health Month.
- The BHSA Integrated Plan has been finalized and will be submitted to the State.
- The MHSA Annual Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in compliance with requirements.
- The Proposition 47 Grant (Cohort 3) has concluded, with participants successfully discharged. Final evaluation by Eval Corp is expected in June.

- **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) Grant**

- Ten participant families have successfully graduated from the program.
- Six participant families are currently enrolled. The grant does not include a cost extension and is scheduled to conclude on June 30, 2026.

- **Training and Compliance – Business as usual.**

- **Finance – Business as usual.**

- **QID**

- March efforts focused on improving data collection for timeliness and access to care.
- Additional training, office hours, and reporting tools were provided.
- These efforts aim to improve service access and reduce the risk of sanctions.

## **3. KernBHRS Clinical Services Report –Jessica Armstrong, Deputy Director**

- **Adult System of Care – Clinic Transitions**

- Three internal outpatient teams are transitioning to contracted providers, with services remaining in the same locations and GSAs.
- Transitions will occur July through September.

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- Staff will be reassigned to other roles needed; no job losses are anticipated.
- **Kern Linkage Program**
  - Staff attended housing-focused trainings; information will support program improvements.
- **Staffing Update**
  - Javon Kemp has been appointed Homeless Adult Supervisor.
- **SUD Division – Proposition 47**
  - Round 5 implementation is underway.
  - A Local Advisory Committee is being formed; community participation is encouraged.
- **Residential Services**
  - Desert Oasis Residential in Ridgecrest is operational and serving clients.
- **Facility Update**
  - American Health Services has relocated to a new Union Avenue site, improving conditions for clients and staff.

**KernBHRS Specialty Clinical Services Report** – Tonya Maddox on behalf of Robin Taylor, Deputy Director

- **Crisis Services Division**
  - Awarded BHCIP Round 2 grant to expand PEC capacity, adding sixteen youth beds and twelve adult beds.
  - Crisis system redesign is underway to improve access, flow, and cost efficiency.
  - Crisis Walk-In Clinic will receive a Goldie Award; the division has been recognized for three consecutive years.
  - Expansion of East Kern Mobile Evaluation Team is in progress to improve crisis response.
- **Medical Services**
  - Fellowship program matched seven PGY-1 and three specialty physicians for 2026–2027.
- **Information Technology**
  - Closed-loop referral process for SUD residential services is in development.
  - ASMI form is live in SmartCare, improving information sharing.
  - RFP for scanning services will support records digitization.

**4. KernBHRS Department Report** – Alison Burrowes, Director

- **BHCIP Awards**
  - External BHCIP projects in Kern County were awarded independently; partnership with the department is not guaranteed and must follow procurement processes.
- **Budget Outlook**
  - Budget submissions are in progress.
  - Fiscal constraints are anticipated; reserves will be utilized.
  - No layoffs are planned; cost-saving measures and operational adjustments are expected.
- **Workforce Development**
  - Kaiser Foundation partnership will provide funding to support clinician licensure, with Kern County prioritized.
- **Care Court Program**

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- The program emphasizes treatment engagement over petitions.
- State feedback indicates a need to align performance metrics, though overall implementation is supported.

**5. Board Member Item:** No comments were presented.

**6. Committee Reports:**

- **Adult Treatment and Recovery Services:** Members were unable to attend.
- **Child Treatment and Recovery Services:** No update; next meeting scheduled for April 9th.
- **System Quality Improvement Committee:** Meeting held; updates included accountability measures and service timelines. Member participation is encouraged.

**7. Announcements to the Public:** None

**8. Adjourn:** MOTION by Michael Bryant to adjourn to the next regular meeting in person on April 23, 2026, Meeting Adjourned at 6:20 PM.