



**Department of Community and Human Services
Behavioral Health and Recovery Division**

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400
Seattle, WA 98104

Phone: 206-263-9100

206-296-0583 (Reception)

206-205-1634 (Clinical Services)

King County Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

May 7, 2026- 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Board Members: *Dae Degrade, David Sullivan, Jasmeet Singh, Kevin Host, Kristina Sawyckyj, Lyscha Marcynyszyn, Mustafa Mohammed, Nancy Dow, Sabina Perry*

Board Members not present: *Stacey Devenney*

Guests: *Carissa Carroll, Natalia Chacon, Mark Cooke, Erin Reinhart, Julian Saucier, Mariann Colonna, Kathleen Murphy, Sharon Turner, Trevor Stuart, Victor Loo, Sarah McCauley, Hana Hartsafer, Rebecca Mendelsohn, Denille Bezemer, Idabelle Fosse, Emily Johnson, Olivia Elwell, Emily Johnson, Christena Coutsubos*

BHAB Board Meeting

The King County Behavioral Health Advisory Board meeting, including board members, staff, and the public, was called to order at 11:32 am.

Welcome & Introductions

Jasmeet Singh welcomed everyone.

- Community members and guests introduced themselves.
- Public Comment Sign-up: via Teams chat

Business Board

Approval of the Minutes for April 2, 2026

The board approved the April 2, 2026, meeting minutes.

Prepared By: Rebecca Mendelsohn

Approval Date: 06/04/2026

Attested by: Kathleen Murphy, Board Liaison

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Governance

Administrative Items & agenda review

Jasmeet Singh reviewed the meeting agenda

Co-Chair Announcements

Email reminder- Encourage members to check their King county email addresses weekly.

In-person Retreat – In-person retreat June 4th from 12:00-4:00pm at King County’s Tukwila office. Open to the public.

Membership Update – Welcome Sabina Perry as the newest Board member. Sarah McCauley was appointed by Executive Zahilay to fill a partial term in position 9. Lucas Sherman’s board position is now vacant. May 7th Board meeting is Nancy Dow’s last meeting as a Board Member.

Legislative Priorities Questionnaire – Board members should complete by May 29th.

BHRD Leadership Update (Denille Bezemer)

Denille Bezemer provided an update on changing Behavioral Health and Recovery Division Leadership. Susan McLaughlin was appointed Director of DCHS and, following her confirmation, will be opening a hiring process to fill Department Division leadership positions. Will continue to keep BHAB updated.

Denille also provided an update on DCHS’s Level-Up work around financial stewardship. Denille provided context on DCHS spending during the Covid-19 Pandemic, explaining that internal systems and policies/procedures did not keep pace with increased spending. In response, DCHS’s Level-Up work now focuses on implementing new contract management policies and procedures, as well as new training and tools for staff. This work is ongoing and DCHS is also rolling up provider-based training around financial contract management and fiscal compliance. The goal is to increase transparency and clarify expectations

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around contracting and providing services for King County, as well as setting providers up for success to deliver on these expectations. DCHS is also recruiting new staff to focus on Level-Up work specifically.

Denille will provide Board with links to DCHS's new policies and procedures.

Denille provided time for Q&A from the Board.

Federal Block Grant Overview and Update (Sharon Turner and Carissa Carroll)

Sharon Turner and Carissa Carroll provided an overview on what is a block grant, what the purpose of block grants is, the background of block grants, the flow of funds and how they are used. Block Grants are administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to address behavioral health issues. There are two types of block grants: Community Mental Health and Substance Use. Both are noncompetitive and available across the entire US. The purpose is to support critical services that Medicaid or other federal and state funds do not cover. Block grants flow from US Congress to SAMHSA to the Health Care Authority to the King County BH-ASO to King County providers. Block grants are awarded in October and cannot be allocated until the state budget is approved. In Fiscal Year 2026, there is \$319 million for Mental Health grants and \$475 million for Substance Use grants federally. King County has about \$2 million available in Mental Health grants in 2026. King County has about \$3.2 million available in Substance Use grants in 2026.

2026 Summary: Mental Health, Substance Use, and Co-response grants continued at fiscal year 2025 distribution levels. Peer Bridger funding was split between federal block grants and state funds.

Sharon and Carissa provided time for Q&A from the Board and offered to continue the discussion at the July Board meeting.

MIDD Update (Natalia Chacon)

Natalia Chacon provided an overview of the MIDD 3 Implementation Plan. MIDD is a County wide 0.1 percent sales tax that addresses substance use and mental health conditions. MIDD was renewed in 2025 and a new implementation plan for 2026-2034 is being drafted right now. BHRD MIDD Team has done community engagement and met with subject matter experts to draft new implementation plan. The draft

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is currently working its way through internal County review processes. DCHS is working with the Executive Office on a plan to communicate the draft to the public and council. MIDD 3 will focus on investing in the long-term availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of King County's behavioral health system. Strategically directing funding into five interconnected areas: care transitions and diversion services, substance use disorder treatment and recovery, equitable access to behavioral health care, child, youth, and young adult mental wellbeing, and behavioral health workforce development.

Natalia provided time for Q&A from Board members.

Legislative Priority Setting Process Update (Christena Coutsoubos)

Christena Coutsoubos provided a process update on setting 2027 legislative priorities. State legislative session starts in mid-January. It is a long session (105 days). It is the first year of the biennium and the state anticipates another budget deficit. BHRD's legislative agenda is a list of policies or investments that King County asks the state's elected leaders to pursue. BHRD recommends priorities to the Executive's Office for inclusion in the County's overall agenda. Christena is starting outreach to partners for input. Later in May, Christena will start narrowing and refining categories and ideas, and then take this feedback to BHRD's executive leadership and management teams. Agenda will be finalized for the Executive's Office in mid-June. Christena shared a BHAB specific survey to gather input and very much welcomes members to complete it and/or forward it to others to complete as well. Christena will also create a survey for peers and share the link for that with Kathleen Murphy for distribution. Input is used to develop legislative priorities, communicate what is most impactful to the County, educate lawmakers at the annual Legislative Forum, focus energy and time for lobbyists, policy staff, and subject matter experts during session. Christena shared the barriers to providing/receiving care BHAB members mentioned in March and asked if there are any additional issues.

Crisis Care Center Annual Report Review Schedule (Rebecca Mendelsohn and Mark Cooke)

Mark Cooke and Rebecca Mendelsohn provided an update on the Crisis Care Center Annual Report review schedule. Mark and Rebecca plan to share a draft for review in early June and are available to receive feedback via email, survey, and requested office hour meetings. Mark and Rebecca will then attend the July Board meeting to discuss feedback and how BHAB input was incorporated into the report narrative. Staff

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from BHRD's Performance, Measure, and Evaluation team will attend a future Board meeting to discuss data collection and analysis more specifically.

Crisis Care Center Levy Update (Idabelle Fosse)

Idabelle Fosse shared a Public Service Media the Crisis Care Centers team did with Converge Media. Idabelle also shared recent community engagement, including in-person and virtual community meetings and tabling events. Events have been organized in partnership with community organizations across the County.

Lived Experience Engagement Framework Update (Kathleen Murphy)

The Board agreed to move this agenda item to a future meeting.

Public Comment

No Public Comment.

Jasmeet Singh requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 pm.