

State of California

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

Commission Meeting Minutes

Date May 22, 2025

Time 9:00 a.m.

Location BHSOAC
1812 9th Street
Sacramento, California 95811

Members Participating:

Mayra Alvarez, M.H.A., Chair	Brandon Fernandez, M.P.H.
Alfred Rowlett, M.B.A., M.S.W., Vice Chair	David Gordon, Ed.M.
Pamela Baer*	Assembly Member John Harabedian
Michael Bernick, J.D.*	by Rosielyn Pulmano
Mark Bontrager, J.D., M.S.W.	Karen Larsen
Sheriff Bill Brown, M.P.A.	Mara Madrigal-Weiss, M.Ed., Immediate
Keyondria Bunch, Ph.D.	Past Chair
Robert Callan, Jr.*	Gladys Mitchell, M.S.W.
Rayshell Chambers, M.P.A.	Jay Robinson, Psy.D., M.B.A.
Senator Dave Cortese, J.D.	Jay'Riah Thomas-Beckett, M.A.
by Marjorie Swartz	Gary Tsai, M.D., DFAPA, FASAM
Makenzie Cross	Jevon Wilkes
Amy Fairweather, J.D.	

*Participated remotely

Members Absent:

Steve Carnevale
Shuo Chen, J.D.
Christopher Contreras
Marvin Southard, Ph.D., M.S.W.

BHSOAC Meeting Staff Present:

Brenda Grealish, Executive Director	Norma Pate, Deputy Director,
Sandra Gallardo, Chief Counsel	Administration and Performance
Melissa Martin-Mollard, Ph.D., Acting	Management
Deputy Director, Program Operations	Kendra Zoller, Deputy Director, Legislation

Courtney Ackerman, Research Scientist
Kallie Clark, Ph.D., Chief of Research,
Evaluation, and Programs
Krsangi Knickerbocker, Attorney

Amariani Martinez, Administrative Support
Lester Robancho, Health Program
Specialist
Cody Scott, Meeting Logistics Technician

[Note: Agenda Items 5, 7, and 9 were taken out of order. These minutes reflect these Agenda Items as listed on the agenda and not as taken in chronological order.]

1: Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Alfred Rowlett called the meeting of the Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (BHSOAC, Commission, or Commission for Behavioral Health (CBH)) to order at 9:10 a.m. and welcomed everyone. The meeting was on Zoom, via teleconference, and held at the BHSOAC headquarters, located at 1812 9th Street, Sacramento, California 95811.

Sandra Gallardo, Chief Counsel, called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum. Attending in Person: Chair Alvarez, Vice Chair Rowlett, and Commissioners Bontrager, Brown, Bunch, Chambers, Designee Swartz for Cortese, Cross, Fairweather, Fernandez, Gordon, Designee Pulmano for Harabedian, Larsen, Madrigal-Weiss, Mitchell, Robinson, Thomas-Beckett, Tsai, and Wilkes. Attending Remotely: Commissioners Baer, Bernick, and Callan.

Amariani Martinez, Commission staff, reviewed the meeting protocols.

2: Announcements and Caring Moment

Vice Chair Rowlett gave the announcements as follows:

Staff Updates

Vice Chair Rowlett welcomed new Commissioner Jay'Riah Thomas-Beckett and newly-appointed Executive Director Brenda Grealish and asked them to introduce themselves.

Vice Chair Rowlett thanked Will Lightbourne for stepping in as Interim Executive Director and skillfully guiding the Commission through this period of transition. Vice Chair Rowlett wished Mr. Lightbourne all the best in his retirement.

Vice Chair Rowlett announced the retirement of Deputy Director Tom Orrock. He thanked Deputy Director Orrock for his years of service with the Commission and wished him all the best in his retirement. He stated Melissa Martin-Mollard, Ph.D., will serve as Acting Deputy Director of Program Operations during the hiring process.

June Listening Session

The Commission will host a Listening Session in June to provide an opportunity to reflect on the work of the Client and Family Leadership Committee (CFLC) and the Cultural and Linguistic Competency Committee (CLCC) to date and to discuss their goals and purpose moving forward. Commission staff is currently developing a proposed agenda for the session. The date for the session will soon be announced.

Additional Advisory Committee Appointments

The Chair, through Vice Chair Rowlett appointed Commissioner Wilkes to the Budget and Fiscal Advisory Committee, Commissioners Fairweather and Thomas-Beckett to the Legislative and External Affairs Advisory Committee, and Commissioner Fernandez to the Program Advisory Committee.

Internal Town Hall

Vice Chair Rowlett stated he and Chair Alvarez had an opportunity to attend an internal town hall that was facilitated by Interim Executive Director Lightbourne. He stated he and Chair Alvarez were the only Commissioners who could attend the town hall, due to Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requirements. He stated he and Chair Alvarez acknowledge comments made by staff and look forward to working collaboratively with staff in advancing the primary tenets that were established by Chair Alvarez and him when they were selected by this Commission to be Chair and Vice Chair of this Commission, including transparency; proactive, positive, supportive communication; and ensuring that the Commission and its staff and the great work that it does with partners and the public is highlighted by everyone in the state of California.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Commissioner Bunch asked if the internal town hall meetings will continue to occur on a regular basis.

Chief Counsel Gallardo stated the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act only allows two Commissioners to attend meetings outside of noticed public meetings in an effort to control serial communication. She stated Chair Alvarez is working on a charter to potentially create a Workforce Committee that would be publicly noticed and would oversee matters within the organization.

Commissioner Bunch asked to be a part of future town halls.

Agenda Review

Agenda Items will be taken out of order due to changes in quorum throughout the day. Also, the lunch break will be changed to a working lunch.

Caring Moment

Commission meetings will begin with a “caring moment,” as suggested by Commissioner Robinson, to help Commissioners center themselves on the purpose of the work and the people served. This practice is meant to remind everyone why the Commission does what it does, to share stories or moments that may impact others in ways that are not always seen, and to provide an opportunity to reflect on how to better serve the community.

Vice Chair Rowlett shared a caring moment about attending the United Parents and Caregivers for Wellness Fifth Advocacy Day, which took place in Sacramento on April 22, 2025. United Parents is the Commission’s advocacy grantee for the parents and caregivers population. This event was impactful for staff on informational, emotional, and personal perspectives. It was a day that underscored the strength,

resilience, and vulnerability of parents and caregivers who face daily challenges with compassion and tireless dedication.

Vice Chair Rowlett stated the keynote address by Senator Susan Rubio focused on the need for student mental health and education for students grades 1-12, mental health curriculum in schools, and a crucial step toward destigmatizing mental health challenges and empowering young Californians to better understand and support one another. Parents and caregivers shared challenges and stories of feeling emotional stress, anxiety, guilt, and inadequacy. Suggestions for remedying challenges included providing access for respite care, expanding support groups, and continuing support of organizations that advocate for mental health rights and systemic changes, even in the midst of budgetary challenges.

Vice Chair Rowlett stated experiences of deep empathy were shared and the healing that took place should remind Commissioners and staff why the Commission does what it does to change the trajectory of lives for many individuals in California. He stated it is through community engagement events like this that the strength of families can be seen to help better understand how critical the Commission's work is in creating meaningful change. He encouraged everyone to attend these events and to connect with those the Commission serves.

3: General Public Comment

Jerry Hall (attended remotely via Zoom), consumer and advocate, stated concern about key elements required by the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), specifically those detailing local community program planning process procedures. The BHSA requires local advisory boards and commissions to review and approve the procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement in all stages of the planning process. All local behavioral health systems do not do this. This is critical because the community voice is lost.

Jerry Hall suggested providing local behavioral health systems with guidance on recommended community planning processes and budget. Consumers and family members are uniquely qualified to co-develop their counties' integrated plans because they are motivated to see a loved one suffer less and receive the care and services that they need.

Laurel Benhamida, Ph.D., (attended remotely via Zoom), Muslim American Society – Social Services Foundation, and the Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCCO), thanked Tom Orrock and Will Lightbourne for their service and welcomed Executive Director Grealish to the Commission.

Esrroleh Mohammad, Ph.D. (attended remotely via Zoom), Clinical Psychologist, systems equity advocate, and the author of the "BureauCare-to-Custody-Cemetery Pipeline," provided an overview of their systems equity framework for public health, institutional safety, and interagency reform and its relevance to issues of interest to the Commission.

4: Consent Calendar

Chair Alvarez stated all matters listed on the Consent Calendar are routine or noncontroversial and can be acted upon in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items prior to the time that the Commission votes on the motion unless a Commissioner requests a specific item to be removed from the Consent Calendar for individual action. She noted that the documents related to these projects and the staff analyses are included in the meeting materials.

Chair Alvarez stated this month's Consent Calendar includes the approval of meeting minutes from the April 24th Commission meeting and innovation plans from Napa and Yolo Counties.

Innovation Proposals:

Chair Alvarez stated the following two innovation proposals align with the BHSA and include plans for sustainability.

1. Napa County: PIVOT – \$290,380 over 3 years.

Chair Alvarez stated the first proposal is from Napa County to help prepare for the BHSA by joining Orange County's Program Improvements for Valued Outpatient Treatment (PIVOT) with a focus on the following three components: Full-Service Partnership Reboot, Developing Capacity for Specialty Mental Health Plan Services with Diverse Communities, and Innovating Countywide Workforce Initiatives.

2. Yolo County: Semi-Statewide Enterprise Health Record Multi-County Collaborative Project – \$5,267,306 over 3 years.

Chair Alvarez stated the second proposal is from Yolo County to join the Electronic Health Records Multi-County Collaborative. This 23-county collaborative was originally approved by the Commission in January of 2023 and is designed to effect local level system change by creating a more integrated, holistic approach to county health information technology collection, storage, and reporting. Yolo County is seeking approval to join the collaborative.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Commissioner Brown asked to vote on the meeting minutes and the innovation proposals separately.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action: Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from April 24, 2025. Commissioner Gordon made a motion, seconded by Immediate Past Chair Madrigal-Weiss, that:

- *The Commission approve the April 24, 2025, Meeting Minutes, as presented.*

Motion passed 19 yes, 0 no, and 2 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Baer, Bontrager, Bunch, Callan, Chambers, Cortese by designee Swartz, Cross, Fairweather, Fernandez,

Gordon, Harabedian by designee Pulmano, Larsen, Madrigal-Weiss, Mitchell, Robinson, Tsai, and Wilkes, Vice Chair Rowlett, and Chair Alvarez.

The following Commissioners abstained: Commissioners Brown and Thomas-Beckett.

Action: Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

Commissioner Bunch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Larsen, that:

- *The Commission approve the Consent Calendar that includes:*
 1. *Napa County: Program Improvements for Valued Outpatient Treatment (PIVOT) up to \$290,380.*
 2. *Yolo County: Semi-Statewide Enterprise Health Record Multi-County Collaborative up to \$5,267,306.*

Motion passed 16 yes, 0 no, and 4 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Baer, Bontrager, Brown, Bunch, Chambers, Cross, Fairweather, Fernandez, Gordon, Larsen, Madrigal-Weiss, Mitchell, Robinson, Tsai, Vice Chair Rowlett, and Chair Alvarez.

The following Commissioners abstained: Senate Designee Swartz, Assembly Designee Pulmano, Commissioner Thomas-Beckett, and Commissioner Wilkes.

[Note: Agenda Item 5 was taken out of order and was heard after Agenda Item 6.]

5: Advocacy Spotlight

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission invites one of its contracted advocacy organizations to each Commission meeting to share the work they are doing to provide advocacy around the state on behalf of and with vulnerable and often underserved communities.

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission has advocacy contracts with organizations that represent the needs of consumers, diverse racial and ethnic communities, families of consumers, immigrants and refugees, K-12 students, LGBTQ communities, parents and caregivers, transition age youth, and veterans. These groups have unique behavioral health challenges that are rooted in systemic, cultural, economic, and social barriers. The Commission’s partnership with these organizations intends to uplift these communities through advocacy and empowerment, and through local behavioral health planning and state-level policy making.

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission will hear a presentation from the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies (CAVSA) on advocacy work conducted for veterans. She asked the representatives from CAVSA and U.S. VETS to present this agenda item.

Michael Blecker, President, CAVSA, and Robert Stohr, Executive Director, U.S. VETS Los Angeles and U.S. VETS Orange County, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the background, work, accomplishments, and impacts of CAVSA’s and U.S. VETS’ advocacy and engagement activities.

Mr. Stohr shared a video of Juan Garcia who shared about himself and some of the work he was able to advocate to create. Mr. Garcia stated he was able to find himself and his purpose through CAVSA's and U.S. VETS' advocacy and engagement activities, which is something that cannot be found without having peer support to lead the way.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Commissioner Tsai asked about the veteran suicide data reported in the presentation.

Mr. Stohr stated veteran suicide data is underreported. The Governor's Challenge for Suicide Prevention is currently doing a study to find a common way for counties to report that data.

Commissioner Robinson asked how to improve as an industry to gain the trust of veterans.

Mr. Blecker stated cultural competency training would help improve communication with the veteran community.

Commissioner Bunch stated appreciation that CAVSA and U.S. VETS partner with legal entities to help veterans.

Commissioner Fairweather stated people do not understand the veteran culture, laws, rules, and freedoms. Veterans' workplace is their home. If they are subjected to trauma at the workplace, they do not have the ability to walk away.

Immediate Past Chair Madrigal-Weiss stated veteran issues include their families. She agreed that the veteran culture is different. It is a culture of secrecy and toughing things out, which impacts the whole dynamic. She emphasized that support in the aftermath must also consider prevention. She agreed with the need to improve the data because, if it is not counted, it does not exist.

Commissioner Brown shared great programs in Santa Barbara County such as the upcoming Stand Down event to be held on October 25, 2025, serving unhoused and at-risk veterans. He stated it would be great for CAVSA and U.S. VETS to attend. He stated Santa Barbara also has the Echo Group, Band of Brothers that does wonderful work. He stated he was pleased to hear about the managing firearms work with CAVSA and U.S. VETS. Some of the solutions to suicide center around storage of firearms during times of crisis.

Commissioner Chambers stated there is an opportunity to bridge movements together. Much is not known about the power and value of lived experience and county and commercial managed care. She suggested synergizing advocacy efforts and projects.

Public Comment

Steve McNally (attended remotely via Zoom), family member and Member, Orange County Behavioral Health Advisory Board, speaking as an individual, stated Juan Garcia's testimony emphasizes the importance of the peer community and cultural competency, both of which are rooted since 2004 in the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The speaker stated concern that the Veteran's Administration does not cover the children. The speaker stated the need for the state to break down siloed funding

arenas. The speaker noted that advocates and family members are also siloed. It is almost impossible for someone whose family member is symptomatic to learn how to get through the system.

Laurel Benhamida, Ph.D., stated Sacramento is the home of more Afghans than anywhere else in the U.S., as well as Syrians and Iraqis. The speaker stated many came to the U.S. as special immigrant VISA holders. They work as interpreters and in other ways with veterans. On behalf of these immigrants, the speaker thanked the veterans who stepped up to help them and protected them from being deported.

6: May Revise Budget Update

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission will hear an update on the state budget and Governor's May Revise budget proposal and will consider approving a revised spending plan including associated contracts. She stated all active grants and contracts are posted on the website. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Norma Pate, Deputy Director of Administration and Performance Management, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the May Revise budget adjustment; the BHSOAC current and proposed budget; elimination of Mental Health Wellness Act funds; and critical funding needed to protect early childhood support, sustain FSPs and Proposition 1 implementation, and preserve peer respite funding.

Deputy Director Pate stated the Governor's May Revise cut the Commission's budget in half. An immediate consequence of this reduction is the elimination of grants focused on children ages 0-5, Full-Service Partnerships (FSPs), and peer respite. She noted that the Administration has suggested using 2026 Innovation Partnership Funds to support Mental Health Wellness Act Grant Programs; however, the \$20 million innovation fund under Proposition 1 is temporary and cannot be replaced with Mental Health Wellness Act Funding.

Executive Director Grealish discussed work being done for wellness in the workplace.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Chair Alvarez acknowledged and stated appreciation for the leadership of Commissioner Chambers and Executive Director Grealish this week, who testified in front of both the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees to advocate for the Commission and to push back against the reduction of the Mental Health Wellness Act appropriation. She stated appreciation for the partnership of a number of organizations across the state that highlighted the importance of these funds.

Chair Alvarez asked staff to follow up by drafting a letter to the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees, as well as to the Assembly and Senate leadership, and to ensure that the letter is sent out this week, outlining the use of those funds and the importance of maintaining them in order to build on what the BHSA is trying to do.

Immediate Past Chair Madrigal-Weiss asked staff to continue to keep Commissioners informed throughout this process. She asked about the internal committee for staff wellness.

Deputy Director Pate stated the internal Mental Health Wellness Committee will bring forward recommendations at a future Commission meeting.

Immediate Past Chair Madrigal-Weiss stated the importance of this Commission to adopt the Workplace Mental Health standards. She volunteered to be on a committee to review lessons learned.

Commissioner Bunch also volunteered to be a part of the committee, if and when it is created.

Commissioner Gordon also volunteered to be a part of the committee, if and when it is created. He stated he was shocked at the Governor's proposed budget cuts. He stated concern that the agreements that grew out of Proposition 1 have now been largely abrogated. He asked staff to supply Commissioners with a copy of the Commission's anticipated work under Proposition 1 that will no longer be possible to do, due to the Governor's May Revise budget cuts.

Commissioner Tsai stated California has made a lot of investments in behavioral health. Staying aligned in terms of the Commission's voice would be helpful. He stated the need to ensure that the Commission invests in mental health and substance use in the spirit of the BHSA. Adding substance use to mental health services already funded through the BHSA, such as the Emergency, Psychiatric Assessment, Treatment, and Healing (EmPATH) Units, is much less substantial than many people would think. This is an opportunity for the Commission to be tangibly investing in both mental health and substance use. Investing in both aligns with Proposition 1 and protects those investments in that there are more communities involved. He stated the need to include both substance use and mental health in every decision moving forward.

Commissioner Fairweather asked for additional information on the budget, Proposition 1, and the loss of Mental Health Wellness Act funding.

Deputy Director Pate stated the Mental Health Wellness Act funding is not related to Proposition 1. The Commission has been receiving these grant funds on an ongoing basis since 2014. The reduction is related to the budget deficit. The Governor's May Revise proposed eliminating these funds from the Commission's budget.

Commissioner Baer suggested giving Commissioners the opportunity to see expenditure reports prior to Commission meetings. Strategic partnerships are one of the most meaningful ways that Commissioners can drive impact. She referred to the \$143,010 contract with Salesforce and suggested looking at intentional connections between these companies and filling the gap by looking at private nonprofit community-based partnerships.

Commissioner Bernick agreed and suggested using Commissioners in terms of bringing in additional resources. This is an important role the Commission can play. He volunteered his help.

Vice Chair Rowlett asked Commissioners to make the correlation between Proposition 1, the Mental Health Wellness Act Fund, and FSPs. One of the Commission's roles is to help identify the best standards of FSP care, the implications of removing that fund, and the Commission's ability to add value to FSP services. Part of Proposition 1 is about working together for the good of the people of the state of

California. The Commission is the entity that ensures that the people of the state of California have the best services possible. Advocacy is important.

Commissioner Chambers thanked Commission staff for requesting that she come to Sacramento to testify on behalf of people of color who consistently have had budgets balanced on their backs. All these programs are critical to Proposition 1 and to the sustainability, effectiveness, efficacy, and ensuring that other entities outside of a condensed department are implementing this.

Commissioner Chambers stated she is implementing almost every program as a nonprofit community-based organization. She stated concern that the Commission will be unable to supplement, support, and uplift Proposition 1, particularly with substance use and mental health. She stated the need for conversations about how to integrate mental health and substance use. She stated the system is already impacted.

Commissioner Chambers spoke in support of peer respites. She stated not everyone needs to go to a hospital. People need to be appropriately placed for their needs. Not discussing integration of services leads to worse outcomes. She made a call to action for every Commissioner and the Executive Director to engage legislators and others in a strength-based, collaborative way in the next couple of weeks on the urgency and need to consistently keep these programs to support the Governor's Proposition 1 Initiative. She asked for a plan about what the Executive Director and Commissioners will do in the next couple of weeks to engage legislators and their partners, CEOs of corporations, and others.

Chair Alvarez asked staff for a set of talking points for Commissioners highlighting these requests and the urgency of now.

Commissioner Brown asked to see Deputy Director Pate's script for her presentation, which includes important details that are not in the presentation slides. He asked, if FSPs are part of the May Revise budget cuts, why the Commission is planning the \$400,000 expenditure for FSP evaluation software.

Deputy Director Pate stated the \$400,000 expenditure is for a contract with UCSF for evaluating the FSP programs, as required under the Welfare and Institutions Code.

Executive Director Grealish stated this is separate from the Governor's May Revise budget cuts.

Commissioner Brown agreed with staff putting together talking points for Commissioners. He encouraged Commissioners to call and send letters to legislators they know personally. He suggested that letters be sent not just to committees but to every legislator from the Commission, and then Commissioners can do follow-up phone calls to legislators they know. It is important for legislators who are not on the committees to understand the importance of these programs and the consequences that will happen if this cut is made the way it is proposed.

Commissioner Gordon agreed with the need to push back. He stated evolving negotiations in the statewide ballot on the residual responsibility of the Commission included that a clear mission of the Commission would be strengthening FSPs and incorporating substance use into the strategies. He stated Sacramento County has 50 clinicians hosted under Medi-Cal in the schools to do pilots around how to

incorporate substance use into services. If FSPs will not be funded, it needs to be made clear.

Senate Designee Swartz asked Commissioner Gordon who the people were that he talked to and if they are still in a decision-making position. She asked staff to include specific projects in each county and their legislative districts in the information provided to Commissioners and the Legislature.

Public Comment

Michael (attended in person), shared their personal experience of not having peer respite funding. The speaker stated their first psychiatric hold was in an acute mental health hospital with physically forced treatment. The speaker stated peer respite funding is important.

Esrroleh Mohammad, Ph.D., provided an overview of their BureauCare-to-Custody-Cemetery Pipeline systems equity framework for public health, institutional safety, and interagency reform and its relevance to issues of interest to the Commission.

Steve McNally asked that the Commission's call to action include members of the public who also know legislators. If the talking points come from family members and the most influential group in the state, it closes the loop. Including the California Behavioral Health Planning Council and local boards and commissions will more greatly increase the number of individuals who can carry the message.

Steve McNally stated concern that California has not leveraged its assets in the way that people can understand, such as the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) and the funding that has gotten pulled out of county mental health and put in other areas. The speaker suggested empowering families to become healthy as a prevention strategy since prevention programs are no longer in existence for the most part.

Steve McNally stated, even though substance use disorder was added to the MHSA and is now called the BHSA, no funding or resources were added while these are two different arenas. He suggested that the Commission share its influence and not only look upstream but also look downstream.

Commissioner Discussion

Chair Alvarez reiterated the call for regular communication as things develop to keep the Commission up-to-date on moving conversations and negotiations in the budget.

Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 expenditure plan and associated contracts. Vice Chair Rowlett made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Robinson.

Commissioner Bunch offered a friendly amendment to remove the \$18,000 office plant expenditure request.

Vice Chair Rowlett and Commissioner Robinson agreed with Commissioner Bunch's friendly amendment.

Action:

- *The Commission approves the Fiscal Year 2024-25 expenditure plan and associated contracts with the exception of the \$18,000 office plant proposal.*

Motion passed 22 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Baer, Bernick, Bontrager, Brown, Bunch, Callan, Chambers, Cortese by designee Swartz, Cross, Fairweather, Fernandez, Gordon, Harabedian by designee Pulmano, Larsen, Madrigal-Weiss, Mitchell, Robinson, Thomas-Beckett, Tsai, and Wilkes, Vice Chair Rowlett, and Chair Alvarez.

[Note: Agenda Item 7 was taken out of order and was heard after Agenda Item 9.]

7: Mental Health Wellness Act Full-Service Partnership Grant

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission will hear a presentation on grant opportunities to strengthen FSPs. She stated the Commission previously approved the allocation of \$10 million in Mental Health Wellness Act funds to be used towards strengthening performance management and improved service delivery for FSPs. This presentation outlines the proposed distribution of those funds through a competitive bid process. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Kallie Clark, Ph.D., Chief of Research, Evaluation, and Programs, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the potential of FSPs, timeline, and Request for Proposals (RFP) specifications for technical assistance and capacity building in performance management. She stated the RFP requires the development of training tools for FSPs across California and establishes a learning collaborative and workgroup for performance metrics.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Chair Alvarez asked for more information on ensuring against duplicating the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) efforts.

Dr. Clark stated the DHCS efforts focus on behavioral health transformation at the county level; those supports are different from what the Commission is doing at the provider level with FSPs. Although there is a component in those around performance management, the manifestation in who those are hitting is vastly different. It should not be duplicative in any way.

Commissioner Bontrager asked about the interplay between this effort and the evidence-based practices in Coordinated Specialty Care and the Centers for Excellence.

Dr. Clark stated the goal of this RFP is to provide tools to help FSP providers track what they are doing internally, self-reflect, and set goals so they can be successful in implementing the new mandates under Proposition 1 and the BHSA, such as adhering to model fidelity within their own organizations. Although the Commission is not giving direct technical assistance around models in this RFP, it is trying to provide people with the tools so, no matter what the goal is in implementing Proposition 1 or outside of Proposition 1, they will be able to do that. This RFP not only allows for adhering to the

BHSA, but also allows for the flexibility that is necessary to understand that people are unique and they should be able to self-determine and set goals for themselves.

Commissioner Bontrager asked about the differences between this RFP and Coordinated Specialty Care, which has robust processes embedded in evidence-based practices around this already.

Dr. Clark stated it is concurrent and does not take the place of Coordinated Specialty Care. This RFP helps providers learn what is going on inside their building from finances, staffing, client goals, and provider goals to the services being provided, which will allow them to ask even larger questions.

Assembly Designee Pulmano asked what was discovered that necessitated this proposal and how this proposal will lead to some form of success in implementation of the BHSA.

Dr. Clark shared the background research processes leading up to this proposal, including talking to individuals who are directly affected by FSP service providers – clients, family members, service providers, and county staff – to better understand what success looks like and how FSPs can be improved. Key areas that came out of these discussions were outlined in the report. This proposal to focus on performance management was one of those key areas that was approved by the Commission in 2024.

Senate Designee Swartz asked how the counties will be selected.

Dr. Clark stated letters of interest are requested as part of the application process. The first phase of this work includes a recruitment process to bring all counties on board.

Commissioner Fairweather stated much of county funding is designated for FSPs. She asked why the DHCS is not responsible for funding this.

Dr. Clark stated staff first reviewed where support was already going to be provided. Counties will receive much support through the Centers of Excellence. This proposal can further this work even more.

Commissioner Chambers urged the Commission to continue to work across the board with multiple departments to fill gaps. She noted that one department cannot do all the work to implement one of the most complex modalities of treatment for the severely mentally ill in all counties with a clinical workforce that is already overworked and fragmented. Much support will be required to help these clinicians even stay in their positions in order to find what is working. She commended staff for their efforts to close gaps.

Vice Chair Rowlett asked for a future presentation about how technical assistance will help consumers and communities that support FSP-type services and how fundamental pillars will be addressed with this funding.

Commissioner Bontrager stated finite resources require judgment. He stated he is uncomfortable with voting on this proposal because any decision made today will have been made in a vacuum, due to the uncertainty of the funding. If the \$10 million in funding was somehow restored, the Commission would need to evaluate at that time which programs to fund.

Executive Director Grealish stated, if the funding is fully restored, there will be \$20 million for peer respite, \$20 million for the 0-5 population, and this proposal of \$10 million of the \$20 million for FSP. She agreed that a decision would need to be made if only a portion of the funding is restored.

Chief Counsel Gallardo stated today's proposal does not affect the \$10 million FSP set-aside.

Chair Alvarez suggested qualifying the motion that allows for another vote in the case of limited resources.

Chief Counsel Gallardo stated concern that an amended motion would lengthen the timeline on releasing the RFP.

Commissioner Fairweather stated the May Revise decreased the budget by \$60 million. She asked to hold the vote until the Governor's revision is complete.

Chief Counsel Gallardo clarified that today's vote only gives the Commission the authority to release the RFP at a future date. Without a vote on the general outline of the RFP, staff would need to come back to the Commission at a future date in order to release it. She stated the motion could be conditioned on the availability of funding, which should be known by July 1st.

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission has selected FSPs as a priority. She stated this is a procedural vote. Dr. Clark has presented the structure of the RFP today. The vote will be about moving forward with the RFP, if resources are available. She suggested adding "pending the release of the RFP on the availability of resources" to the motion.

Commissioner Bontrager agreed.

Chief Counsel Gallardo read the motion as amended: the Commission authorizes staff to release an RFP to award \$10 million in Mental Health Wellness Act funding through a competitive bid process, pending the availability of resources, designed to coordinate the recruitment, technical assistance, and training for county behavioral health departments and FSP service providers to build internal capacity in performance management.

Public Comment

Richard Johnson, Chief Executive Officer, Healthy Brains Global Initiative (HBGI), stated the HBGI has been partnering with the Commission for over two years exploring FSPs and trying to review the level of performance across the system and where there might be opportunities to improve it. The speaker shared key findings written in the report and results from their community engagement process.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Bunch asked about the connection with the HBGI.

Dr. Clark clarified the key findings and what they mean for performance management for FSP providers. She stated the importance of tools that allow providers to listen to what clients say they want and need. Looking at service provisions is one example of how it connects to the RFP, along with staffing and funding. Client-specified outcomes and goals are a part of this equation.

Assembly Designee Pulmano stated the FSP population is a difficult population. They have serious mental illness and are at risk of being unhoused. The goal of the RFP is assisting providers on how to communicate with these individuals, how to do a warm handoff if necessary, and how to help them navigate through the system of FSPs that counties are responsible for implementing.

Dr. Clark agreed.

Action: Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to approve the release of an RFP to award Mental Health Wellness Act funding. Commissioner Bunch made a motion as originally proposed, seconded by Commissioner Madrigal-Weiss, that:

- *The Commission authorizes staff to release an RFP to award \$10 million in Mental Health Wellness Act funding through a competitive bid process designed to coordinate the recruitment, technical assistance, and training for county behavioral health departments and FSP service providers to build internal capacity in performance management.*

Motion passed 12 yes, 6 no, and 1 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Baer, Bernick, Bunch, Callan, Chambers, Cortese by designee Swartz, Cross, Harabedian by designee Pulmano, Larsen, Madrigal-Weiss, Vice Chair Rowlett, and Chair Alvarez.

The following Commissioners voted “No”: Commissioners Bontrager, Fairweather, Fernandez, Mitchell, Robinson, and Thomas-Beckett.

The following Commissioner abstained: Commissioner Wilkes.

8: Lunch

Due to time constraints, no lunch break was taken.

[Note: Agenda Item 9 was taken out of order and was heard after Agenda Item 10.]

9: Innovation Partnership Fund & Public, Private, and Nonprofit Partnerships Discussion

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission will participate in a panel discussion to explore a range of public, private, and nonprofit partnership models. This session will also include a preliminary facilitated discussion to help prioritize potential concepts for further exploration as part of the upcoming Innovation Partnership Fund Grant.

Chair Alvarez stated appreciation for the work done last year to explore the potential use of the Innovation Partnership Fund, as presented by Commissioner Carnevale at the February Commission meeting. At the same time, the Commission heard the community’s clear call for a process grounded in transparency and accountability.

Chair Alvarez stated, in response, the Commission issued a Call for Concepts survey, welcoming broad input to help shape both the priority areas and the overall process moving forward. Together, these efforts reflect the Commission’s commitment to co-creation, transparency, and continuous refinement as it moves toward launching the Innovation Partnership Fund.

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission believes that an independent third-party facilitator is essential to this process. The facilitator will not only engage with Commissioners but also actively listen to the community. His role is to help the Commission clarify its vision and goals, define areas of focus and funding structures, and articulate what success looks like. He will also support the Commission in ensuring that the Innovative Partnership Fund is inclusive, transparent, and accountable to the communities it aims to serve.

Chair Alvarez stated, to support this work, the Commission's Program Advisory Committee will help iterate key issues and develop a draft framework for the Innovation Partnership Fund. The goal is for this framework to be shared with external partners and communities for feedback and, ultimately, presented to the full Commission for approval in the fall.

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission will begin with an engaging panel discussion featuring two distinguished leaders who are shaping cross-sector collaboration in California. This session will explore successful models of public-private-nonprofit partnerships, highlight what works in practice, and share lessons learned from the field. She introduced the members of the panel and asked them to give their presentations.

Maricela Rodriguez

Maricela Rodriguez, Senior Advisor for Civic Engagement and Strategic Partnerships, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, provided an overview of the background, insights, and best practices with a focus on philanthropy. She encouraged the Commission to look at public-private partnerships as an opportunity to be creative and innovative, go beyond the delivery of core government services, and look for opportunities to explore new innovations in services that can be scaled to improve those services.

Recommendations include the following:

- Invest in relationships.
- Maintain active and consistent touchpoints with state and philanthropic leaders and the community.
- Define clear roles and responsibilities for all involved.
- Center and communicate impact.
- Design partnerships in collaboration and in response to community needs.
- Coordinate on priorities.
- Coordinate to more effectively execute public programs.
- Identify partnership opportunities.
- Maximize public and private investments for communities.
- Connect the dots.
- Identify areas of cross-sectoral alignment across issue areas and translate them into opportunities for collaboration.
- Secure early wins, drive for long-term impact, and work towards sustainability.

- Leverage investments to also center equity.
- Focus on outcomes.
- Focus on the work being done in collaboration with philanthropy and with communities.
- Look at how effectively the community is coordinating, how effectively prospects have been engaged, and the outcomes of these engagements.

Kate Anderson

Kate Anderson, Executive Director, Center for Strategic Partnerships, provided an overview of the background and structure of the Center for Strategic Partnerships. She suggested using the Innovation Partnership Fund for cross-sector collaboration.

Olivia Celis, Health Equity Director, Center for Strategic Partnerships, provided an overview of the ways to use philanthropic funding for initiatives. She suggested that there may be opportunities through innovations in working with and leveraging philanthropy, looking to philanthropy for ongoing funding, building on their infrastructure, and helping advocate for different system changes.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Commissioner Fairweather stated she can see that this has not been used much for county-based services. She asked where the sustainable funding comes in. She agreed with prioritizing funding for non-profits, public agencies, and tribal organizations. She stated she does not see where the for-profit sector belongs in this other than as subcontractors and vendors.

Ms. Anderson stated the importance of including the government partner from the beginning.

Commissioner Larsen asked if the goal of the innovation partnership is to ensure that public-private partnerships are available to projects funded or supported. She noted that many concepts in the meeting materials are duplicative of things that are already happening at the statewide level. She spoke against duplicating efforts when resources are shrinking.

Commissioner Larsen encouraged that, before deciding on funding any projects, the Commission have an agreed-upon rubric for making decisions where all Commissioners can understand how decisions will be made and how different types of proposals will be weighted.

Chair Alvarez stated many of these questions will be discussed in the next portion of this agenda item.

Commissioner Baer stated the increasing demand and rising complexity of needs are being seen. She stated the need to reach out to the public and private communities to encourage them to be in this together to improve health outcomes of youth and children.

Chair Alvarez stated much of the presentations spoke to the power of collaboration between county and state government and philanthropy. She asked about the hesitations of moving beyond philanthropy and looking at venture capitalists and private

industry. She asked the panel where they would caution or encourage the Commission to explore more.

Ms. Anderson encouraged the Commission to fund innovations that counties are interested in making so partners are motivated and included from the beginning.

Ms. Rodriguez stated sustainability is a goal in public-private partnerships. Getting there is a journey beginning with research to identify gaps and needs or to test to find opportunities. She noted that bringing in other voices makes a greater impact beyond just government or philanthropy.

Commissioner Gordon stated there are other innovations happening around work in schools, such as the California Community Schools Partnership Program that is currently in thousands of schools throughout California to try out approaches to providing various services. He suggested that the Commission consider what will happen to the good ideas that have been tested during this innovation when that funding ceases.

Marko Mijic

Chair Alvarez introduced and welcomed Marko Mijic, Managing Director, Sellers Dorsey, who is a California health policy expert, having served many years in state government. She stated contracts were presented during the Commission's budget presentation at the last meeting. One of those contracts was to engage Mr. Mijic to be a third-party facilitator to engage the Commission in this conversation.

Chair Alvarez stated Mr. Mijic will facilitate a dialogue with Commissioners today about the Proposition 1 Innovation Partnership Fund. Through this dialogue, the Commission will work on aligning goals, values, guiding principles, and priorities for the Innovation Partnership Fund. Among the questions explored will be:

- How do we want to approach the Innovation Partnership Fund?
- Who are the target populations? Is it limited to the BHSA target populations?

Chair Alvarez stated Mr. Mijic will continue to work closely with the Commission's Program Advisory Committee to synthesize community input, refine concepts, and help develop clear criteria for funding eligibility, evaluation, and a transparent selection process.

Chair Alvarez stated Mr. Mijic will return to the Commission in the fall to present a final framework and share findings from this collaborative effort. She asked Mr. Mijic to facilitate the final portion of this agenda item.

Mr. Mijic began his presentation by reciting the poem "An Invitation to Brave Space," by Micky ScottBey Jones. He showed a word cloud of the themes raised by Commissioners and the public from the Commission's Call for Concepts survey and noted that the main theme mentioned was being community centered. He stated the goals for today's discussion were as follows:

- Ground the work in shared goals and values that reflect the Commission's commitment to equity, community partnership, and system transformation.

- Explore the impact the Innovation Partnership Fund will have at the individual, community, and system levels.
- Discuss the potential structure and approach of the Fund, including how it can support innovation, scale, and sustainability.
- Identify the critical questions the Commission must answer together throughout the design process to ensure the Fund is inclusive, effective, and transformative.

Mr. Mijic provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of developing the framework and areas of discussion and consideration, including clarifying the vision and goals; defining investment pillars; fund structure and types of support; governance and decision-making; capacity-building and technical assistance; data, metrics, and outcomes; financial sustainability and policy change; and communications and storytelling. For each of these areas of consideration, he asked Commissioners to provide input to surveys and word clouds to provide to the Commission's Program Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Mr. Mijic asked a series of questions for each of the eight areas of consideration to facilitate the discussion and Commissioners provided feedback as follows:

1. Clarify the vision and goals – what we hope to achieve at the system, community, and individual level.
 - The Commission needs a new strategic plan to reflect Proposition 1's new charges and responsibilities.
 - Avoid duplication with other initiatives in California.
 - Use the Fund to expand beyond current work to experiment with sustainability and scalability to improve systems.
 - Focus on access for those without access and those with barriers to access.
 - Focus on prevention as early as possible over treatment. Use whatever means is most effective.
 - Focus on real, actual services, not on process.
 - Integrate the Proposition 1 substance use component. The header on the page says "Commission for Behavioral Health" and the first sentence of the concept says that it addresses behavioral health, while the entire content of the preceding paragraph discusses only mental health issues.
 - Innovation occurs when trying to solve a problem, but this exercise seems like the problem trying to be solved is how to spend this money. It is important not to get lost in the process.
 - Define innovation in the state of California. Innovation is not the same as transformation. County innovation projects of the past have not been innovative.
 - Supplement, fund, enhance, and improve the provisions of service.

- Focus on what needs to be accomplished, such as prevention and access.
 - Learn the results of current and past programs and innovation.
 - Learn what has worked and do more of that.
 - Focus on outcomes and data to prove what works to the Legislature.
 - A collaborative process is the ideal mechanism to achieve good outcomes.
 - Success means that youth can navigate the ills of the world, especially those who are alone, to have the brightest of futures.
 - Measure impacts.
2. Define investment pillars – establish funding priorities or “pillars” to guide selection and ensure balance across innovation types and communities.
 - Workforce.
 - Navigation.
 - Youth.
 - Integration of mental health and substance use.
 - Financial support for a pipeline to jobs in behavioral health.
 - Increase employment levels of individuals with behavioral health challenges.
 - Require a data component to get the funding.
 - Limit the number of Commission focuses and go deep. Develop an organized schedule for each one to get the biggest return on investment.
 - The Commission can fill in the gaps and provide technical assistance.
 - Learn what going to a Medi-Cal inherent system will do to the system of care while implementing Proposition 1.
 - Provide up-front funding to cover the costs that Medi-Cal reimburses for.
 - Education provides free meals for children in schools based on the poverty level of the school area. Try this in terms of behavioral health services. All students would be eligible for behavioral health services by virtue of going to that school.
 3. Fund structure and types of support – determine how funding will be deployed to support a diverse range of ideas and organizations.
 - Establish a certain percentage that goes to administrative and patient expenses.
 - Get feedback from the Sierra Health Foundation on their experience in giving out multiple segments of funding.
 - Lead by principle to make funding accessible to smaller, community-led groups.
 - Learn what is beyond philanthropy and the public sector.
 - Tiering helps to better target varied agencies at different stages of development.

- It is important to recognize that different sectors with different ways of thinking have different goals. Structure agreements and arrangements in a way to facilitate the BHSA and the Commission's goals, mission, and values.
 - The public needs to own this public money and public programs.
 - Pay attention to silos. Figure out how to get everyone at the table.
 - Dedicate funding for technical assistance.
 - Clearly identify the problem to be solved.
4. Governance and decision-making – ensure fund decisions are inclusive, transparent, and accountable to the communities served.
 - No feedback given.
 5. Capacity-building and technical assistance – level the playing field so emerging or community-led organizations can compete, grow, and succeed.
 - Clearly define what technical assistance is.
 6. Data, metrics, and outcomes – define what success looks like early and how the Fund will learn and improve over time.
 - Synthesize the data to be collected. Do not overburden providers by asking them to spend more time on data collection.
 - Include an evaluator for all the projects or standardize the data infrastructure and supports to help small organizations.
 - Make data collection a collaborative effort from the beginning between the grantee and the Commission.
 - Implement the new system of immediately measuring community opinions suggested by Commissioner Carnevale in a past meeting.
 - Explain why the data is important to get buy-in.
 7. Financial sustainability and policy change – ensure that impactful innovations live beyond the grant term and influence broader system changes.
 - No feedback given.
 8. Communications and storytelling – share what works, lift-up community voices, and build public will for behavioral health transformation.
 - No feedback given.

Public Comment

Stacie Hiramoto (attended in person), Director, REMHDCO, agreed with defining innovation. It is important to include the public in all decision-making.

Chair Alvarez stated this is the opportunity for public input. The dialogue today demonstrates that the Commission has not made any decisions. The Commission contracted with Mr. Mijic, who will provide additional opportunities for public input.

Chief Counsel Gallardo stated that the Commission will relax Robert's Rules of Order for the Advisory Committees to create more of a public dialogue on issues.

Jerry Hall stated the funding available to counties for the community program planning process could be used to encourage community engagement and training on how to use data.

Jerry Hall noted that it does not take five years of funding to learn if a project is working. The speaker encouraged incorporating a fail-fast method in the criteria for innovation program design elements and mechanics to evaluate and assess what is not working more quickly in order to drop funding for those projects and enhance projects that are delivering outcomes beyond expectations.

Jerry Hall stated the need for the Commission to develop a framework that includes a transparent and collaborative process with counties, and to publish results on the website to inform the community and gather community feedback at each stage of the process, especially from consumers and families.

Selena Liu Raphael (attended remotely via Zoom), California Alliance of Child and Family Services (CACFS), stated the CACFS is eager to partner with the Commission to help inform and co-create ideas for the Innovation Partnership Fund. Community-based organizations can help bring in constituents from the community to identify needs. The speaker suggested locating gaps geographically and within target populations and gathering feedback on unmet needs.

Steve McNally asked how the state still does not know what works and how the Governor can control a process that changes the entire funding cycle and eliminates the MHSA every three years – at \$2 billion to counties – by changing the funding structure on top of taking No Place Like Home and other funding.

Steve McNally stated the Legislature is getting more and more frustrated during hearings at not getting answers to their questions. The speaker asked who will stand up collectively as a group and say to this executive branch that communities expect the executive branch to create an agency structure that requires that people work together. The speaker stated one department cannot do community health work while another department does peers and another creates 5,000 positions where people are not really getting employed and will not be able to bill.

Steve McNally stated details matter. The speaker stated the great presentations given to the Commission in its archives before the Department of Mental Health was eliminated show that they are the same presentations being seen today but were not implemented. Many Legislatively-required reports are not even done.

Steve McNally asked what it will take for someone to stand up and be patient- and client-centered in California, and not create a mild to moderate system that looks like a mental health plan. Enhanced Care Management (ECM) is just another FSP in many ways. It is important to engage communities. It is easy to manipulate a small group of people; everyone needs to have a voice at the table. The speaker noted that it is difficult to watch this happen on the backs of individuals with serious mental illness.

Joel Baum (attended remotely via Zoom), Director of Learning Design, Safe Passages, part of the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP), stated there is currently a

serious trust gap in the public. The speaker questioned the Commission's decision-making process to emphasize philanthropy in today's meeting. The speaker stated the need for solutions that work that include committing to engaging with, listening to, and learning from the communities being served.

Jay Calcagno (attended remotely via Zoom), Policy Analyst, California Behavioral Health Association (CBHA), echoed the previous speaker's comments around the community's desire for greater transparency and involvement. The speaker encouraged the Commission to review and adopt the recommendations put forward in the May 15th coalition letter offered by REMHDCO, including opportunities for robust community participation and input with a transparent planning and implementation process, the inclusion of Community-Defined Evidence Practices (CDEPs) as a funding priority as part of the Commission's broader focus on serving marginalized populations, and prioritizing public non-profit and tribal entities for innovation funding.

Katherine Ferry (attended remotely via Zoom), UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities, part of the CRDP, and past CLCC member, agreed with the importance of a robust community engagement process, and defining what innovation looks like to this funding. The speaker noted that the CRDP's final year of funding was eliminated mid-stream from the Governor's budget.

Katherine Ferry noted that the CRDP includes information on many points that were discussed today and includes a robust evaluation carried out by Loyola Marymount University. The CRDP has a capacity-building component for community-based organizations that involve technical assistance providers. The speaker encouraged the Commission to review the CRDP Statewide Evaluation Report available online reporting on project years 2016 to 2022.

Ruqayya Ahmed (attended remotely via Zoom), Policy Manager, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN), stated the current structure of Commission discussions feels like the community is being asked to respond to a framework that has already been shaped rather than being invited in as co-designers from the start. The speaker stated CPEHN and more than two dozen organizations submitted a letter of principles to the Commission last week outlining core values that should guide the Innovation Partnership Fund, including ensuring a participatory design process and prioritizing meaningful support for CDEPs. The speaker stated CPEHN values the opportunity to partner with the Commission and looks forward to continuing this work in ways that centers community.

Sarah Illing (attended remotely via Zoom), Local Evaluator, CRDP, working with Trans: Thrive – San Francisco Community Health Center, responded to the question about the problem to solve and the innovation needed. The speaker stated the innovation needed is political clarity and commitment to values that the state of California stands with undocumented and trans people.

Sarah Illing suggested the Targeted Universalism Framework by Dr. John Powell at the Othering and Belonging Institute, which is about universal rights, what everyone deserves, and targeted strategies to get there.

Alex Filippelli (attended remotely via Zoom), Project Co-Director and Technical Assistance Liaison, Center for Applied Research Solutions, part of the CRDP, urged the Commission to prioritize CDEPs in the development of the Innovation Partnership Fund. Research findings from the CRDP show that CDEPs are effective at improving behavioral health. The speaker encouraged the Commission to look to the CRDP for examples of utilizing technical assistance and evaluation in innovations work.

Alex Filippelli stated impacted communities need to be empowered as co-creators in the Innovation Partnership Fund's design and strategy and not just consulted in surveys or in public comment. Decisions are being made that are eroding trust. It is important to prioritize transparency and public trust.

Alex Filippelli encouraged the Commission to define innovation through an equity and systems change lens. Innovation must be defined broadly to include community-defined and non-clinical approaches. The definition of innovation should reflect lived experiences and human practices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, trans, queer, disabled, and low-income communities. The speaker asked the Commission to think about systems change in a way that centers equity, sustainability, and long-term community impact beyond five-year funding with no built-in pathway to sustainability.

Imelda Vera (attended remotely via Zoom), Program Manager, Humanidad Therapy and Education Services, part of the CRDP, and Commissioner, First 5 Sonoma County, shared the background and activities of Humanidad Therapy and Education Services. The speaker spoke in support of the CRDP.

Erica Juhn (attended remotely via Zoom), Technical Assistance Provider to various Asian American and Pacific Islander organizations of the CRDP, encouraged the Commission to include more feedback from the public into this discussion, especially from many diverse communities, on what constitutes innovation and what should be funded with the Innovation Partnership Fund.

Erica Juhn stated community buy-in and administrative support are important for community organizations to survive. Many community organizations have lasting outcomes because they invest in community relationships. This takes time. The speaker asked the Commission to invest in communities by supporting CDEPs, which prioritize building on existing relationships and trust to ensure that people are connected to supports and resources.

Laurel Benhamida, Ph.D., challenged Commissioners to double the money from the government by approaching philanthropists. The speaker stated the need to pay and provide technical assistance to small community-based organizations in the CRDP who fill gaps in access to culturally- and linguistically-appropriate services that millions of individuals in California need to achieve their goals.

Dr. Benhamida suggested streamlining the billing bureaucracy. Many counties are currently streamlining building "granny flats" or accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by giving individuals pre-approved building plans. The speaker suggested coming up with creative ways to remove the bureaucracy in health insurance billing in California.

Commissioner Discussion

Chair Alvarez thanked Mr. Mijic for his facilitation and continued partnership in this effort. She stated the Commission is looking forward to community dialogue sessions to be facilitated by Mr. Mijic. She asked that the community dialogue sessions be noticed as a public meeting so all Commissioners can attend.

10: Impacts of Firearm Violence

Chair Alvarez stated the Commission will receive and consider adoption of the policy report *Stopping the Hurt: Preventing the Harms of Firearm Violence Through Public Behavioral Health*. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Courtney Ackerman, Research Scientist, provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the summary, background, project, and findings of the Impacts of Firearm Violence Project Report. She gave recommendations as follows:

- California must establish trauma-informed violence prevention as a public behavioral health priority.
- California must deploy a public engagement initiative to regain trust and build relationships with firearm-owning communities and communities impacted by violence.
- California must develop a unified statewide strategy, with an appointed leader, to guide a public health approach to firearm violence prevention that integrates data, resources, and partners from across sectors.

Commissioner Comments & Questions

Commissioner Bunch stated she was sad that two years of work and education was cut down to a 10-minute presentation. She thanked Ms. Ackerman for the amazing job she did on this report.

Chair Alvarez agreed with the need to create space for these reports that are requirements and reflect the Commission's commitment to these issues and not limit attention to the incredible work that staff puts into creating them. She noted that the work does not stop with these reports; the report recommendations need to be integrated in the Commission's priority work efforts.

Commissioner Brown stated the goal of the Committee was a practical report that could be used to save lives without the politics of gun control and the divisiveness that that brings. He stated appreciation for Ms. Ackerman for her work in putting the report together. He stated the hope that this report can be used to help people who own guns recognize the responsibility that goes along with gun ownership for safe storage and safe handling. He noted that this report is a tool that can be used for many years to help save lives.

Commissioner Fairweather stated the Veterans Administration had a partnership with the Shooting Sports Foundation, which was effective, especially in rural communities. She asked about action steps to move this work along.

Commissioner Cross stated she worked for a youth collaboration that worked collectively with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Office of Health Equity (OHE) on the Take Space to Pause Campaign. Regarding Recommendation 2, it will be important to have a public awareness campaign about the impacts of firearm violence. She suggested putting information about the impacts of firearm violence on social media. She offered to help with the social media campaign.

Vice Chair Rowlett thanked Ms. Ackerman for her powerful presentation. He agreed with the importance of advocacy, particularly in communities of color. He agreed with Finding 3: California's public investments have not been coordinated effectively to address the underlying causes of violence and other public health concerns, and stated this is the problem – leadership makes many investments, but they are not coordinated and do not show outcomes and key performance indicators that demonstrate what is working.

Immediate Past Chair Madrigal-Weiss stated Ms. Ackerman did an amazing job. She noted that the report reflects the people and the professionals equally well. This is difficult to do. She asked, once the report is adopted by the Commission, that a strategy is determined as to where it will be shared.

Assembly Designee Pulmano asked for more information on the \$6.5 billion per year direct cost and the overall annual cost to Californians of \$37 billion.

Ms. Ackerman stated the smaller number refers to criminal justice, court, and law enforcement costs that are directly attributable to incidents of firearm violence. The larger number refers to work loss, loss of productivity, and harms to wellbeing.

Public Comment

Esrroleh Mohammad, Ph.D., provided an overview of their BureauCare-to-Custody-Cemetery Pipeline systems equity framework for public health, institutional safety, and interagency reform and its relevance to issues of interest to the Commission.

Commissioner Discussion

Action: Chair Alvarez asked for a motion to adopt the Impacts of Firearm Violence Project Report. Commissioner Bunch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Brown, that:

- *The Commission adopts the Impacts of Firearm Violence Project Report.*

Motion passed 18 yes, 0 no, and 2 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Baer, Bontrager, Brown, Bunch, Callan, Chambers, Cross, Fairweather, Fernandez, Gordon, Larsen, Madrigal-Weiss, Robinson, Thomas-Beckett, Tsai, and Wilkes, Vice Chair Rowlett, and Chair Alvarez.

The following Commissioners abstained: Senate Designee Swartz and Assembly Designee Pulmano.

11: Early Psychosis Intervention Strategic Plan

Chair Alvarez tabled this agenda item to the next Commission meeting.

12: Adjournment

Chair Alvarez stated, with the leadership of Commissioner Robinson, who led the Executive Director Search Committee, the Commission is planning to evolve that Committee into a Workforce Optimization Committee to have leadership and direction around how to improve the operations of the Commission as an organization, including culture, commitment to staff, wellbeing, and overall communication. The Commission speaks a lot about transparency and communication to external communities. That value is just as important internally.

Chair Alvarez thanked Commissioner Robinson for his willingness to Chair the Workforce Optimization Committee. Staff will be reaching out to Commissioners to learn about their interest in being on this new Committee.

Chair Alvarez stated the next Commission meeting will take place in Sacramento on July 24th. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.