



2025

# Policy Platform

A comprehensive review of our  
advocacy and priorities.

# Executive Summary

The California Behavioral Health Association (CBHA) has a long, successful history of advocating for a behavioral health system that provides comprehensive, effective, and easily accessible care for all Californians. As the state's leading voice for diverse behavioral health providers, our focus remains on addressing the needs of our members and the clients they serve. As we set the stage for 2025, our statewide policies continue to evolve to meet the emerging challenges faced by our communities and harness the opportunities to drive change.



**Le Ondra  
Clark Harvey, Ph.D.**  
Chief Executive Officer

**95**

Members and Businesses

**2M**

Clients and communities  
served

**LIFESPAN**

Focus populations

# Experience the CBHA Difference: Learn Why We Lead

*“The work we do isn’t going to just benefit our members, it benefits the whole community.” - Le Ondra Clark Harvey, Ph.D., CEO, CBHA*

*“CBHA makes a difference in the entire state of California by helping to advocate and design policies that help so many of our fellow Californians.” - Tim Ryder, MBA, CEO, San Fernando Valley Mental Health Center*

*“CBHA represents an opportunity to see what's happening throughout the state... it helps me stay focused on our individual clients...they feed us information that then allows us as an organization to strategically figure out our own path to sustainability and success.” - Al Gilbert, MBA, CEO at Felton Institute*

*“CBHA is the direct pathway towards relationship development across the state with behavioral health providers. They are a respected organization and we are proud to be associated with them and support their mission.” - Ryan Napier, Business Development Lead at Chorus Innovations*

*“Being a part of CBHA gives you the opportunity to understand the way things are being done differently in different counties. This matters from a personal perspective because you can learn from other people’s challenges.” - Vitka Eisen, Ed.D., CEO, HealthRIGHT360*

*“CBHA has highlighted the importance of behavioral health throughout the state of California.” - Al Rowlett, LCSW, CEO, Turning Point Community Programs*

*“CBHA is the thinktank, the policy leader, the legislative whisperer but it’s also a place where we come in and we talk about our clinical vision and about practical needs in the communities we serve.” - Jonathan Porteus, Ph.D., CEO, WellSpace*

*“There are strength in numbers and being able to share concerns and speak as one voice, carries that voice much further and your able to elevate the issues that impact the community.” - Sarita Kohli, MFT, CEO, Asian Americans for Community Involvement*

**[Click here to watch how CBHA empowers behavioral health leaders.](#)**

# Advocacy Overview

CBHA advocates for initiatives that strengthen California's behavioral health safety net. Here are key areas where, in partnership with community-based organizations, clients, and community stakeholders statewide, we can continue to build on our strong foundation to elevate the health and prosperity of every Californian.



## FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

- CalAIM Implementation and Payment Reform
- Minimum Wage Impacts
- Managed Care Accountability and Reducing Access Barriers
- Welfare Tax Exemption
- BHSA Allocation and Bonds Funding
- Nonprofit Infrastructure Parity with Physical Healthcare Coverage
- Private Attorney General's Act and Impact on BH Providers



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM

- 988 Implementation Crisis Continuum of Care and Crisis Intervention Sustainability
- Crisis Continuum of Care
- CARE Act
- Electronic Health Record Systems and ECM Contracting
- Workforce Shortage and Wage Increases (SB 525)
- MHSR Reform/Proposition 1
- Timely Access to Quality Care

- Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative
- School-Based Behavioral Health
- Rural Behavioral Health
- County/Behavioral Health Partnerships
- Parity with Physical Healthcare Policies
- Integrating Culturally Adaptive MH Training for Community Members
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) Expansion

## ▼ SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER EXPANSION

- Opioid Epidemic
- Youth SUD System
- Increasing Funding and Access to SUDS
- Expanding Use of Opioid Antagonists
  - Field Based Services
- Evidence-Based Equitable Solutions for Diverse Communities

## ▼ EQUITY AND SOCIAL DRIVERS

- Poverty, Social Safety Net, and System of Care Disparities
- Housing, Homelessness, and Behavioral Health
- Re-Entry and Transition Into Community Post Incarceration
- Stigma Reduction
- Voluntary Versus Involuntary Treatment

## ▼ PERSON-BASED CARE

- Youth and Young Adults
- Supporting LGBTQIA+
- Supporting BIPOC
- Older Adults, Children, and Adults (serving across the lifespan)
- Veterans
- Unhoused Individuals





## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

- Growing a Diverse Workforce
- Paperwork/Documentation Reduction
- Peer Support and Services
- Elevating Lived Experience
- Retaining Talent
- Cross-State Licensing/Reciprocity
- Private Attorney Generals Act



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INNOVATION

- Expanding Technology & Telehealth
- Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI)
- Physical and Behavioral Health Integration
- Mobile Crisis Expansion
- Data Systems & Sharing

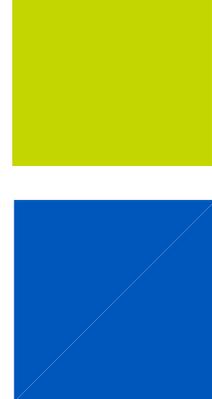


## EMERGING TRENDS AND PRACTICE INNOVATIONS

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Behavioral Health
- Psychedelic Research
- Telehealth Modalities
- Digital Therapeutics
- Biofeedback and Neurofeedback



# The Heart of CBHA: Our Members



Our members represent a vast network of community-based behavioral health providers serving over two million Californians. They cater to a diverse population, including children, families, adults, older adults, unhoused individuals, those transitioning home post-incarceration, and many more. CBHA believes that these community-based organizations (CBOs) are the pillars of California's behavioral health landscape. By representing their voice in California, we aim to fortify California's safety net, making it more resilient and responsive.

## Our Advocacy Goals

At CBHA, our advocacy is rooted in championing the needs and aspirations of our members who provide vital services across California. We actively engage with legislative bodies, policymakers, and agency officials to bring about constructive change. Our primary goal is to bolster California's behavioral health safety net, ensuring every Californian can access the care they deserve. In this journey, we believe that CBOs are instrumental, and we strive to amplify their impact.

**100%**

Committed to  
collaboration across all  
systems.



**100%**

Committed to amplifying  
the voices of our  
membership.

# Vision for an Equitable Behavioral Health Safety Net

CBHA advocates for a behavioral health system where equity is foundational. We recognize that achieving this is crucial to our mission and addressing the broader societal challenges that often intersect with behavioral health. Our focus is to ensure that all individuals, regardless of background or identity, receive quality care tailored to their needs. Community-based organizations (CBOs) stand at the forefront of this effort, bridging gaps, fostering community wellness, and addressing a blend of clinical and social needs. We are deeply concerned about the disparities experienced by racially and ethnically diverse communities and the LGBTQIA+ community. CBHA has embarked on pioneering initiatives to tackle these inequities head-on, such as our Race and Social Equity Task Force. Collaborating with our national counterparts, we have also created a BIPOC Affinity Group to champion BIPOC leaders as they construct more inclusive health systems. Beyond this, CBHA continually cultivates an environment of inclusivity for our members and staff team.

## FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Adequate financial backing is fundamental to the sustained success and potency of California's behavioral health infrastructure. Providers frequently underscore the importance of consistent fiscal support and sound economic frameworks to bolster community-based treatment services. CBHA stands committed to championing these concerns. Through our advocacy efforts, we engage with key stakeholders and policymakers to ensure that community-based organizations (CBOs) receive the funding they need to reach California's most vulnerable communities. By doing so, we aim to fortify the foundation of care that these CBOs provide, ensuring they can continue their invaluable work in serving Californians.

- **CalAIM Implementation and Payment Reform:** Including CBOs in payment reform conversations to ensure adequate compensation for services rendered under California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM). To date, the new fee for service compensation rates is inadequate to keep critical services operating in our most vulnerable communities.
  - ECM and Community Supports



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- **Minimum Wage Impact:** Addressing factors influencing healthcare wage levels, ensuring competitive compensation to retain quality professionals, and public reimbursement covering those wages.
  - **Managed Care Accountability and Reducing Access Barriers:** Streamlining processes within managed care makes it easier for providers to obtain necessary care authorization. Holding organizations accountable to state guidelines is essential.
  - **Welfare Tax Exemption:** Removing barriers to run non-profits and provide behavioral health services remains important. Equity in non-profit tenancy is just as important as providing services to those in need. Ensuring that non-profits are protected and provided with the most funding to support their clients adds continual support in the critical work. However, to ensure that non-profits are protected, we must advocate for holding tenancy laws accountable in equity and access.
  - **BHSA Allocation and Bonds Funding:** The Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) is allocating bonds to various behavioral health facilities, and as an advocacy organization, it's crucial to continue engaging with stakeholders and state leaders to ensure sustainable funding, proper fund allocation, and realignment of programs like Preventative and Early Intervention services to meet California's needs. Additionally, there is a pressing need for \$300 million to support counties during this transition and minimize care reductions.
  - **Nonprofit Infrastructure:** Strengthen the foundation of nonprofit organizations and the systems that contract with them to ensure they can effectively serve their communities. While also addressing the challenges they face with auto insurance, property tax exemptions, and more.
  - **Parity with Physical Healthcare Coverage:** We underscore the need for public behavioral health providers to receive equitable compensation from the state, comparable to private sector rates. Public and nonprofit providers need such parity to compete, potentially limiting access to quality care for many Californians.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM

As California pioneers a robust behavioral health framework, CBHA and its members are dedicated to augmenting our infrastructure to address the rising demand for services. Central to this growth is the proper funding and support for the organizations and the professionals at the front line of care. Without substantive changes to the payment structure, prolonged wait periods and staffing shortfalls will persist. As initiatives like 988 and the crisis continuum of care gain more state backing, the role of CBOs in care delivery remains indispensable. Emerging systems, including the CARE Act and the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), will benefit from the input of community-based providers. Our behavioral health ecosystem is intricate, a blend of public and private players. Elevating the expertise of all stakeholders is imperative for ensuring Californians benefit from holistic and effective care.

- **988 Implementation:** Ensuring the 988-crisis hotline as an alternative to 911 for mental health emergencies is adequately funded and integrated with critical community-based support.

- **Crisis Continuum of Care:** Establishing a full spectrum of care services for individuals experiencing behavioral health crises, including mobile crisis services as an alternative to emergency rooms and police engagement.
- **CARE Act:** Ensuring the equitable implementation of the CARE Act to strengthen behavioral healthcare while preserving individual rights.
- **Electronic Health Record Systems and ECM Contracting:** When serving clients, our members provide comprehensive and in-depth intake methods to ensure a proper record of understanding their journey with healing and receiving services. For agencies to properly retain and assist clients, they must have an efficient and reliable system that protects clients' information. It is important to us that we stay up to date with recent and modern systems that streamline documentation records, clients' needs, and providers' work. The Electronic Health Record Systems is an important feature that CBHA prioritizes keeping our members up to speed on.
- **Workforce Shortage and Wage Increases:** As the behavioral health system in California continues to meet an increasing demand, a robust workforce is crucial. CBHA will continue to support efforts that would encourage an expanded workforce, including through wage increases. As SB 525 implementation takes effect, CBHA will provide members with resources needed to accommodate these changes.
- **MHSA Reform/Proposition 1:** To ensure that the transition from MHSA to BHSA achieves its aims while preserving community-based service delivery, CBHA will actively advocate for the involvement of providers in the decision-making processes. Their firsthand experiences and understanding of the nuances within our community will be crucial for the successful modernization of the act. Ensuring CBOs are included in funding opportunities will also help preserve community-based care.
- **Timely Access to Quality Care:** Ensuring patients can access high-quality care promptly when needed and wait times are minimal for behavioral health treatment.
- **CYBHI:** Promoting the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative is sustainably funded to expand services available to California's youth and schools.
- **School-Based Behavioral Health:** Enhancing mental health services within schools for early detection and intervention. Expanding opportunities for school staff to be trained on behavioral health issues. Working with community-based providers to expand school-based services is critical.



- **Rural Behavioral Health:** Addressing unique challenges in rural areas, ensuring residents receive adequate care and providers are adequately resourced to provide services wherever their clients are.
- **Parity with Physical Healthcare Policies:** Ensuring mental healthcare is given equal importance and resources as physical healthcare.
- **Integrating Culturally Adaptive Mental Health Training for Community Members:** Amplifying awareness and tools to highlight culturally competent policies and leaders in the behavioral health space.
- **CCBHC Expansion:** This important national program is administered by SAMHSA and provides up to one million dollars per year to improve access to services for those with serious mental illness, emotional disturbances and substance use disorders. The CCBHC model intersects with the goals of CalAIM, California's 1115 Demonstration Waiver. CBHA will continue to be in the forefront of the CCBHC discussion and leading advocacy efforts to expand CCBHC's in the state. CBHA has partnered with the California Primary Care Association to advocate for the State's support of the CCBHC Demonstration Grant and other programs and will continue to do so in 2025.

## SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER EXPANSION

CBHA members include organizations that deliver services across the behavioral health field, including mental health services, substance use disorder services, developmental disability services, and other health and wellbeing programs. While we champion the growth of these programs, we're acutely aware of the escalating substance use crisis in the state, which frequently overlaps with other behavioral health issues. Our existing structures are ill-equipped and underfunded to tackle this challenge, leaving numerous Californians without essential services. CBHA advocates for increased funding in SUDS services alongside strategies that enhance accessibility and eliminate obstacles. Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of streamlined collaboration among primary healthcare, mental health, and SUDS systems. Dispelling misconceptions and stigma associated with substance use treatments is pivotal for our progress.

- **Opioid Epidemic:** Combating the widespread misuse of opioids and providing resources for recovery.
- **Youth SUD System:** Creating specialized systems for addressing substance misuse in young individuals. Increasing awareness for the dangers of fentanyl.
- **Increasing Funding and Access to SUDS:** Allocating funds and resources to SUD treatments alongside awareness and stigma reduction campaigns.
- **Expanding Use of Opioid Antagonists:** Promoting the funding and use of drugs that counteract opioids, such as naloxone, to prevent overdose deaths.
  - Field Based Services
- **Evidence-Based Equitable Solutions for Diverse Communities:** Implement proven methods to create diverse and stable environments and communities while emphasizing treatment over incarceration.

## EQUITY AND SOCIAL DRIVERS

Care should be straightforward and all-encompassing. In a multifaceted state like California, the diverse needs of its residents are paramount. All voices must be heard and acknowledged to deliver effective behavioral health services. CBHA members operate within communities, often at the crossroads of multiple societal challenges. By amplifying the voices of our members and their beneficiaries, we aim to confront social disparities directly. Additionally, by collaborating with governmental representatives, we aspire to shape legislation that fosters enhanced care for everyone. If we recognize and respond to how social issues drive behavioral health outcomes, we can shift our systems to be preventative and solve challenges before they escalate.

- **Poverty, Social Safety Net, and System of Care Disparities:** Addressing the link between poverty and mental health and ensuring equal access to across socioeconomic groups.
- **Housing, Homelessness, and Behavioral Health:** Tackling the intertwined issues of housing instability and mental health challenges, supporting models that combine housing with behavioral health services, ensuring that individuals receive holistic care.
- **Re-Entry and Transition into Community Post Incarceration:** Assisting individuals in transitioning back into society after incarceration, focusing on their behavioral health needs. Ensuring adequate funding for services for people deemed incompetent to stand trial and those involved in pre-trial diversion and Care Courts.
- **Stigma Reduction:** Campaigning to reduce societal stigmas associated with mental health and substance use disorders.
- **Voluntary Versus Involuntary Treatment:** While involuntary treatment might be necessary in certain situations, the rights and dignity of individuals with behavioral health conditions must always be prioritized. CBHA will advocate for clear guidelines that ensure due process, respect, and dignity are maintained at every Stage.



## PERSON-BASED CARE

Behavioral healthcare must be molded to suit the individual it serves. CBHA and our members advocate for a wide array of communities spanning various ages, identities, and backgrounds. Our dedication lies in guaranteeing individuals can tap into behavioral health resources that resonate with their life stage and experiences. CBHA is steadfast in partnering with visionaries striving to broaden personalized care for young people, older adults, families, BIPOC, Veterans, Children and Families, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

- **Youth and Young Adults:** Addressing the distinct behavioral health challenges younger populations face, including growing crises in depression and youth substance use.
- **Supporting LGBTQIA+:** Offering targeted resources and care for LGBTQIA+ individuals, considering their unique experiences and challenges. Ensuring specialized care for LGBTQIA+ people overrepresented in systems like child welfare, juvenile justice, housing assistance.
- **Supporting BIPOC:** Addressing disparities in care for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, ensuring equity in access and quality care.
- **Supporting Immigrants and Refugees:** Providing services and resources that are culturally, racially, and ethnically appropriate for individuals seeking care.
- **Older Adults:** Catering to the specific behavioral health needs of the aging population.
- **Children:** Providing comprehensive services to support children and their families in navigating behavioral health challenges and public systems like child welfare, juvenile justice, housing support etc.
- **Adult:** Addressing adults' unique behavioral health needs, CBHA emphasizes personalized care that recognizes this broad demographic's diverse challenges and life stages.
- **Veterans:** Acknowledging unique and challenging experiences and offering specialized care that helps Veterans thrive.
- **Unhoused Individuals:** Recognizing the impact of housing instability on behavioral health, CBHA advocates for specialized care that addresses immediate needs and works towards long-term solutions for unhoused individuals.



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

Strengthening the behavioral health workforce — encompassing proper resources, effective recruitment, training, and retention — sits high on CBHA's agenda.

California grapples with a personnel challenge as CBHA members regularly face difficulties in staffing vacancies across all tiers. Inadequate reimbursement rates contribute to this challenge, especially when juxtaposed with appealing offers from the private sector and other public platforms. CBHA stands firm in its resolve to back strategies that boost resources and enlarge the scope of our behavioral health professionals. This workforce is the linchpin of the behavioral health safety net, and their competence and welfare are intrinsically tied to the caliber of care rendered.

- **Growing a Diverse Workforce:** Encouraging a workforce that reflects California's diverse population, fostering understanding and empathy.
- **Paperwork Reduction:** Streamlining administrative tasks allows providers to focus more on patient care. Overly complex regulations often prevent providers from serving more Medi-Cal beneficiaries. We will advocate for eliminating redundant documentation, streamlined pre-authorization processes, and integrating electronic health records (EHRs) across State and County systems.
- **Peer Support & Services:** Empowering individuals with lived experience to support and guide those facing challenges is crucial. Addressing the shortage of peer and wellness coaches by establishing reimbursement rates can attract talent and improve these numbers.
- **Elevating Lived Experience:** Valuing and integrating the insights of those with firsthand experience with behavioral health challenges, personally and in their families. Reducing barriers for those with lived experience to enter the field.
- **Training & Education:** Strengthening the behavioral health workforce begins with supporting education and training. CBHA will promote policies for scholarships, residencies, and loan repayment programs, while advocating for consistent training and certification standards across all roles.
- **Retaining Talent:** Implementing policies to enhance job satisfaction—such as competitive compensation, continuing education opportunities, and clear career advancement pathways—can address wage disparities between highly credentialed staff and those delivering most services. Bridging this gap is crucial for promoting workforce diversity and equity.
- **Cross-State Licensing/Reciprocity:** Addressing barriers that prevent providers from offering telehealth services across state lines, thus expanding access to specialized care.
- **Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA):** This Act allows employees to sue for civil penalties on behalf of the State of California for Labor Code violations. Pursuing a PAGA claim requires compliance with Labor Code Sections 2698–2699.8. There have been unintended consequences of this Act that negatively impact behavioral health providers across California. CBHA will continue to educate policy makers about the impact the act has on our members, in order to bring awareness to the issue and advocate for meaningful change.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INNOVATION

From its inception, CBHA has passionately worked towards positioning California at the forefront of behavioral health innovations. Initiatives like Prop 63, championed and authored by our founder Rusty Selix, and our involvement in rolling out programs such as CCBHCs and 988, underscores CBHA's contribution to the progress of the behavioral health sector over time. With a mounting national focus on behavioral health and significant commitments from the Governor's Office and State Legislature to amplify services and programs, we are poised at a pivotal moment to catalyze transformation in this domain. CBHA remains steadfast in endorsing novel concepts, community-centric approaches, and groundbreaking behavioral health initiatives that empower the state and CBOs to enhance every Californian's overall health and happiness.

- **Expanding Technology & Telehealth:** Leveraging technology to offer remote treatment, reaching individuals who might not have access to in-person services.
- **Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI):** Implementing strategies to detect and address behavioral health challenges at the earliest stages.
- **Physical and Behavioral Health Integration:** Combining physical and mental health services for a comprehensive approach to wellbeing.
- **Mobile Crisis Expansion:** Championing the implementation and funding of mobile crisis units, ensuring timely responses to behavioral health emergencies, and reducing the burden on hospital emergency departments.
- **Data Systems & Sharing:** Supporting standardized data collection efforts that track disparities, ensuring transparency and accountability in addressing them.



## EMERGING TRENDS AND PRACTICE INNOVATIONS

As behavioral health challenges evolve, so do the methods and approaches from leaders and practitioners in the field. The advent of new technologies, research breakthroughs, and a greater understanding of human psychology have given rise to innovative practices that promise to revolutionize care. CBHA members remain at the forefront of these transformations, continuously adapting and integrating emerging trends to ensure that Californians benefit from the latest and most effective interventions in the field. Embracing these innovations, we aim to enhance the quality of care, accessibility, and overall outcomes for individuals across the state.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Behavioral Health**
- **Psychedelic Research**
- **Telehealth Modalities**
- **Digital Therapeutics**
- **Biofeedback and Neurofeedback**



# Partner with CBHA

The future of California's behavioral health is a shared journey. If you're passionate about championing reform in this pivotal sector and joining hands with CBHA and our members in our mission to uplift every Californian's wellbeing, we invite you to reach out. Please email P Moreno-Gonzalez at [pmoreno@cccbha.org](mailto:pmoreno@cccbha.org) to get in touch. Together, let's shape a brighter, healthier future for our state.



***Advocacy.***



***Connection.***



***Results.***