



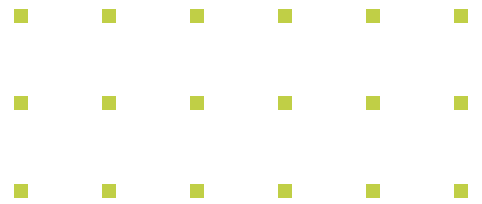
**CBHA**  
CALIFORNIA BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH ASSOCIATION



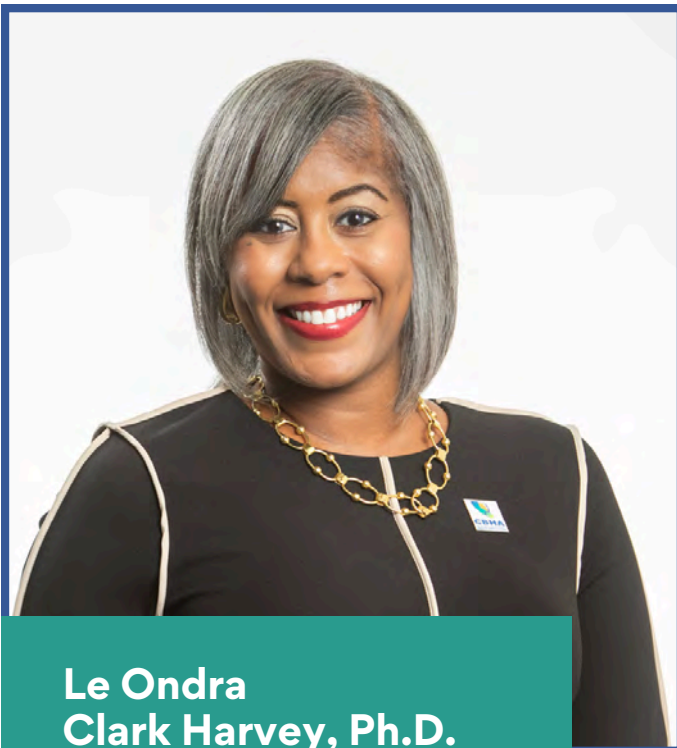
# 2026 POLICY PLATFORM

A comprehensive review of our advocacy and priorities.

# Executive Summary



The California Behavioral Health Association (CBHA) has long championed a behavioral health system that delivers accessible, effective, and person-centered care for all Californians. As the state's leading voice for community-based behavioral health providers, our commitment remains firmly rooted in advancing the well-being of both our members and the individuals they serve. Entering 2026, CBHA continues to evolve its behavioral health policies to address emerging challenges and seize opportunities to strengthen care delivery across the state.



**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, 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, 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***

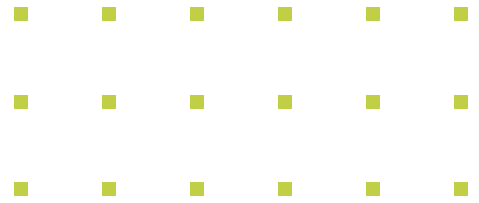
*“CBHA has highlighted the importance of behavioral health throughout the state of California.” - **Al Rowlett, LCSW, CEO, Turning Point Community Programs***

*“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 policies that reinforce and expand California's behavioral health safety net. Through partnership with community-based organizations, clients, and local stakeholders, we aim to build on our strong foundation to ensure that every Californian—regardless of background or circumstance—can thrive within a system that promotes health, equity, and opportunity.



## FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

- CalAIM Implementation and Payment Reform
- Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports
- Workforce and Funding Alignment
- Managed Care Accountability and Reducing Access Barriers
- Welfare Tax Exemption
- BHSA Allocation and Bond Implementation
- Nonprofit Infrastructure
- Parity with Physical Healthcare Coverage
- Payment Reform
- Private Attorney General's Act and Impact on Behavioral Health Providers



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM

- 988 Implementation Crisis
- Crisis Continuum of Care
- CARE Act and Proposition 36 Implementation
- Electronic Health Record Systems and ECM Contracting
- MHSA Reform/Proposition 1
- Timely Access to Quality Care



- Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI)
- School-Based Behavioral Health
- Rural Behavioral Health
- Integrating Culturally Adaptive Mental Health Training for Community Members
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) Expansion
- Stabilize Community-Based Housing Programs for Behavioral Health Clients



## SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER EXPANSION

- Opioid Epidemic
- Youth SUD System
- Increasing Funding and Access to SUDS
- Expanding Use of Opioid Antagonists
- Evidence-Based Equitable Solutions for Diverse Communities
- SUDS American Society of Addiction Medicine 4.0 Implementation
- Outcomes and Data Tracking



## 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
- Supporting Immigrants
- Immigrant and Undocumented Populations
- Older Adults
- Children
- Adults
- Veterans
- Unhoused Individuals



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

- Growing a Diverse Workforce
- Paperwork Reduction
- Peer Support and Services
  - Offering Student Loan Repayment Programs
  - Expanding and or creating Behavioral Health Provider Programs
  - Reimbursement Rates
  - State Award and Grants for Behavioral Health
- Elevating Lived Experience
- Training and Education
- Retaining Talent
- Cross-State Licensing/Reciprocity
- Expand Workforce Protections for Nonprofit Safety-Net Providers Under PAGA
- Support Provider Readiness for BHSA Transition and Implementation



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INNOVATION

- Expanding Technology and Telehealth
- Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)
- Physical and Behavioral Health Integration
- Mobile Crisis Expansion
- Data Systems and Sharing
- Protected Patient Information and Data Sharing
- Data Compatibility for Providers and Billers
- Advance Digital Equity for Behavioral Health Clients



## EMERGING TRENDS & PRACTICE INNOVATION

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

# The Heart of CBHA: Our Members

CBHA's membership represents an extensive network of community-based organizations serving more than one million Californians. These providers support children, adults, older adults, unhoused individuals, and people transitioning from incarceration—among others. CBOs form the backbone of California's behavioral health system, delivering care that is local, responsive, and grounded in community trust. By advocating for their needs and priorities, CBHA strengthens the state's behavioral health safety net to ensure it remains resilient and equitable.

## Our Advocacy Goals

CBHA's advocacy centers on elevating the voices of our members—the community-based providers delivering essential behavioral health services statewide. We engage directly with legislators, policymakers, and agency leaders to inform effective policy and systems change. Our core objective is to strengthen California's behavioral health safety net so that every individual can access high-quality, community-based care. We recognize CBOs as key drivers of this work and seek to amplify their impact through coordinated advocacy and policy development.

# 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 envisions a behavioral health system built on equity, inclusion, and respect. Achieving equity is essential to our mission and to addressing the broader social and economic forces that shape behavioral health outcomes. Our goal is to ensure that all Californians—across race, ethnicity, gender identity, and lived experience—receive care that reflects their needs and values. Community-based organizations (CBOs) are central to this vision, connecting people to care, strengthening communities, and integrating clinical and social supports. CBHA continues to advance equity through initiatives which uplift diverse leaders and build more inclusive systems of care. We also remain dedicated to fostering equity within our membership and staff culture, reflecting the values we champion statewide.

## FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Stable and adequate funding is essential to maintaining a strong behavioral health system. Community-based providers consistently emphasize the need for predictable, equitable funding to sustain critical services. CBHA works closely with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure that funding structures reflect the real costs of care and support the long-term viability of providers serving California's most vulnerable populations. A sustainable fiscal foundation safeguards access to care across the state.

- **CalAIM Implementation and Payment Reform:** Including CBOs in payment reform discussions to secure adequate compensation for services rendered under California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM). Current fee-for-service rates do not sustain critical services in high-need communities.
- **Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports:** Emphasizing the importance of strong partnerships between Managed Care Plans (MCP) and CBOs as behavioral health services expand through 1115 waivers and other behavioral health transformation initiatives.
- **Workforce and Funding Alignment:** Address compensation challenges through advocacy for public reimbursement rates that reflect increased wage requirements. Ensure competitive pay to retain qualified professionals in behavioral health.
- **Managed Care Accountability and Reducing Access Barriers:** Streamline the managed care process to make authorizations faster and simpler. Hold organizations accountable to state guidelines to prevent care delays.
- **Welfare Tax Exemption:** Remove barriers to running non-profits and provide behavioral health services. Equity in non-profit tenancy is 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 Bond Implementation:** The Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) is allocating bonds to behavioral health facilities and spaces. CBHA will continue to engage stakeholders and state leaders to ensure sustainable funding, equitable allocation of resources, and alignment of programs such as Prevention and Early Intervention services with the needs of California.
  - Funding from the Bond has already begun to be distributed. Moving forward, we must ensure clear pathways to sustainable services, equitable disbursement of funds, and alignment across county contractors to strengthen outcomes for communities statewide.
  - CBHA will also monitor local implementation plans to ensure bond-funded projects are equitably distributed across rural, urban, and underserved communities. Transparency and accountability measures must be enforced to track outcomes and prevent inequities in allocation.
- **Nonprofit Infrastructure:** Strengthen the foundation of nonprofit organizations and the systems that contract with them. Address operational challenges they face, including auto insurance, property tax exemptions, and other barriers that impact service delivery.
- **Parity with Physical Healthcare Coverage:** Secure equitable state compensation for public behavioral health providers, comparable to private sector rates. Without parity, public and nonprofit providers risk losing workforce capacity, limiting access to quality care for many Californians.
- **Payment Reform:** Support providers navigating payment reforms including transitions to value-based payment, fee-for-service, and more.
- **Private Attorneys General's Act (PAGA) and Impact on Behavioral Health Providers:** Increase awareness across legislative and regulatory bodies of the impact PAGA has had on community based behavioral health providers. Advocate for amendments to reduce the financial burden PAGA claims have on providers. Support community based behavioral health providers in protecting themselves from unsubstantiated PAGA claims that may hinder their ability to provide services to those in need.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM

As California continues to modernize its behavioral health system, CBHA and its members remain focused on building a strong and sustainable continuum of care. Adequate funding, payment reform, and workforce support are critical to meeting the growing demand for services. Without meaningful changes, challenges such as long wait times and staff shortages will persist. Initiatives like 988, the Crisis Continuum of Care, the CARE Act, and the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) all rely on community-based providers to succeed. By ensuring that CBOs are fully integrated into these efforts, California can deliver coordinated, equitable, and effective behavioral health care statewide.

- **988 Implementation Crisis:** 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 and Proposition 36 Implementation:** 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. In order 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 in keeping our members up to speed on.
- **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. CBHA has published its [Best Practices for Provider Engagement](#) with guidance for providers to get involved in the county-level planning process for the BHSA Integrated Plan.
- **Timely Access to Quality Care:** Ensuring patients can access high-quality care promptly when needed and that 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. Ensuring CYBHI activities are expanded through the new Fee Schedule and related funding.
- **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. Ensuring the sustainability of activities and partnerships developed through the Community Schools Partnership Program. 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. Ensuring behavioral health is prioritized in funding opportunities under the federal Rural Health Transformation Program.
- **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.
- **CCBHCs Expansion:** Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) offer an evidence-based, comprehensive model of care that expands access to mental health and substance use disorder services. CBHA will continue to advocate for federal and state support to expand California's participation in the CCBHC demonstration. Priorities include securing sustainable reimbursement, supporting smaller CBOs in transitioning to the CCBHC model, and aligning state payment structures with CCBHC requirements to ensure long-term viability.
- **Stabilize Community-Based Housing Programs for Behavioral Health Clients:** Prioritize state-level strategies to protect and stabilize permanent supportive housing (PSH) programs serving behavioral health clients. Advocate for funding protections, bridge strategies, and portfolio preservation efforts to mitigate displacement risks created by Proposition 1 implementation and federal scoring changes that threaten high-acuity PSH programs.
- **Standardize and Sustain Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports:** Advance statewide consistency in ECM and Community Supports contracting, data-sharing, and administrative requirements. Advocate for sustainable reimbursement and operational stabilizers that ensure long-term viability for providers delivering these services.

## SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER EXPANSION

CBHA's members deliver a broad spectrum of behavioral health services, including treatment for mental health and substance use disorders. Yet the state continues to face an escalating substance use crisis that intersects with other behavioral health challenges. Existing systems remain underfunded and fragmented, leaving too many Californians without the care they need. CBHA advocates for expanded and sustained investment in substance use disorder (SUD) services, streamlined coordination between behavioral and primary health systems, and ongoing efforts to reduce stigma surrounding treatment. By strengthening these connections, we can improve outcomes and create a more responsive continuum of care.

- **Opioid Epidemic:** Combating the widespread misuse of opioids and providing resources for recovery. Ensuring treatment services and resources are adequately funded at the state and federal levels.

- **Youth SUD System:** Creating specialized systems for addressing substance misuse in young individuals. Increasing awareness of the dangers of fentanyl. Ensuring Proposition 64 revenues fund prevention and intervention programs for young individuals.
- **Increasing Funding and Access to SUDS:** Allocating funds and resources to SUD treatments alongside awareness and stigma reduction campaigns. Ensuring individuals are able to access SUD services without encountering barriers to care (e.g. insurance denials).
- **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.
- **SUDS American Society of Addiction Medicine 4.0 Implementation:** Advocate for providers to receive technical assistance and support with the implementation of ASAM 4.0, which may impact electronic health records requirements, county contracting, and more.
- **Outcomes and Data Tracking:** Bring awareness to the challenges SUDS providers face with outcomes and data tracking requirements. With partners and allied organizations, highlight the need for providers to be included in establishing requirements and the importance of technical assistance and support in adhering to requirements.

## EQUITY AND SOCIAL DRIVERS

Comprehensive, equitable behavioral health care requires addressing the social conditions that shape health outcomes. In a diverse state like California, effective care depends on listening to and responding to the lived realities of all communities. CBHA members operate at the intersection of multiple social systems—housing, education, justice, and employment—where disparities are most visible. By elevating their perspectives and collaborating with policymakers, CBHA works to dismantle systemic inequities and build a behavioral health system that prioritizes prevention, equity, and community-driven solutions.

- **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. Enhancing collaboration between housing and behavioral health providers to support wraparound services in housing settings.



- **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. Ensuring the behavioral health system maintains adequate funding and capacity to serve individuals directed through court-mandated treatment.
- **Stigma Reduction:** Campaigning to reduce societal stigmas associated with mental health and substance use disorders. CBHA will partner with statewide campaigns, schools, and employers to promote public education, workforce anti-stigma training, and culturally competent awareness programs. Reducing stigma is critical to improving early intervention, retention in care, and long-term recovery.
- **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

Effective behavioral health care must be person-centered—designed around each individual’s unique background, identity, and experience. CBHA and its members are committed to advancing personalized approaches that reflect California’s diversity and meet people where they are. Our work supports access to care for youth, older adults, families, veterans, BIPOC communities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and others who rely on community-based behavioral health services. Together, we are building a system where every person can receive compassionate, relevant, and effective care throughout their life.

- **Youth and Young Adults:** Addressing the distinct behavioral health challenges younger populations face, including growing crises in suicide and youth substance use.
- **Supporting LGBTQIA+:** Offering resources and care for LGBTQIA+ individuals, recognizing their unique experiences and challenges and addressing the needs of those overrepresented in systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice, and housing assistance etc.
- **Supporting BIPOC:** Addressing disparities in care for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, ensuring culturally competent services and equitable access to high-quality care.
- **Supporting Immigrants:** Recognizing the impact of linguistic and cultural expertise on behavioral health access.
- **Immigrant and Undocumented Populations:** Maintain fierce advocacy and support for immigrant communities and their right to access timely, culturally competent behavioral health care. Support providers in preparing for changes to federal and state landscapes that may impact their ability to care for undocumented individuals.

- **Older Adults:** Addressing the need for coordination behavioral health, primary care, and long-term care of the aging population. CBHA will advocate for increased funding for older adult behavioral health specialists, integration of behavioral health into aging and disability resource centers, and programs that address co-occurring cognitive decline and behavioral health conditions.
- **Children:** Providing comprehensive services to support children and their families in address behavioral health challenges while navigating public systems, including child welfare, juvenile justice, housing support etc. address behavioral health challenges while navigating public systems, including child welfare, juvenile justice, housing support etc.
- **Adult:** Addressing adults' unique behavioral health needs, CBHA emphasizes personalized care that reflects the diverse challenges and life stages withing this broad demographic. This includes enhancing access to services for working-age adults balancing employment, caregiving, and behavioral health needs. Policy priorities will include employer-supported behavioral health benefits, workplace mental health initiatives, and protections against discrimination.
- **Veterans:** Acknowledging unique and challenging experiences and offering specialized and high-quality care that helps Veterans thrive.
- **Unhoused Individuals:** Recognizing the impact of housing instability on behavioral health, CBHA advocates for specialized care for both immediate needs and long-term solutions for unhoused individuals.

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

A strong behavioral health workforce is the foundation of California's safety net. Persistent staffing shortages, low reimbursement rates, and high administrative burdens continue to challenge providers statewide. CBHA supports strategies that attract and retain qualified professionals, strengthen peer support programs, and promote competitive compensation. Building a diverse workforce that reflects the communities served will improve outcomes, enhance cultural competence, and ensure the sustainability of essential services.

- **Growing a Diverse Workforce:** Build a workforce that reflects California's diverse population, fostering understanding, empathy, and effectiveness.
- **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 policies eliminating redundant documentation, streamlining pre-authorization processes, and integrating electronic health records (EHRs) across State and County systems.
- **Peer Support and Services:** Peer Support Specialists are transforming behavioral health care in California, bringing vital lived experience and connection to recovery. With Medi-Cal certification now in place, peers are entering the workforce in growing numbers across the state. CBHA is committed to advancing policies that ensure sustainable reimbursement, expand training opportunities, and integrate peers into

care teams at all levels. By elevating the role of peers, we strengthen equity, trust, and engagement across the behavioral health system.

- **Offering Student Loan Repayment Programs:** Expanding loan repayment programs to include certified Peer Support Specialists, alongside licensed clinicians, ensures financial stability and encourages workforce growth in high-need areas.
- **Expanding and/or creating Behavioral Health Provider Programs:** CBHA will promote partnerships between counties, providers, and higher education institutions to expand peer training pipelines, creating pathways from community colleges and lived-experience programs into the certified peer workforce.
- **Reimbursement Rates:** Ensuring Medi-Cal and county contracts reimburse peer services at sustainable rates is essential. Without fair reimbursement, community-based organizations cannot integrate peers into care teams at scale.
- **State Award and Grants for Behavioral Health Workforce:** CBHA supports dedicating state workforce grant dollars specifically to expand the peer workforce, including technical assistance for CBOs integrating peers into their staffing models. Recognizing peers through competitive grant opportunities signals California's commitment to elevating lived experience as a professional pathway.
- **Elevating Lived Experience:** Integrate insights from individuals and families with firsthand experience. Reduce barriers that prevent them from entering the workforce.
- **Training and Education:** Bolstering the behavioral health workforce begins with supporting education and training. CBHA will promote policies that increase scholarships, residencies, and loan repayment programs targeting those entering the behavioral health field.
  - Importance of consistent training and certification standards across various roles.
- **Retaining Talent:** Improve job satisfaction through competitive compensation, continuing education opportunities, and career advancement pathways.
  - Address wage and rate disparities between higher-credentials staff and those providing bulk of services, stressing its impact on workforce diversity.
- **Cross-State Licensing/Reciprocity:** Remove barriers to providing telehealth across state lines to expand access to specialized care.
- **Expand Workforce Protections for Nonprofit Safety-Net Providers Under PAGA:** Promote nonprofit-specific reforms to the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) that recognize the unique constraints of safety-net behavioral health organizations. Support exemptions or alternative compliance pathways that protect the workforce while reducing disproportionate legal and financial burdens on community-based providers.
- **Support Provider Readiness for BHSA Transition and Implementation:** Secure dedicated technical assistance funding and infrastructure supports to ensure that providers can meet BHSA (formerly MHSA) requirements. Prioritize investments in data systems, reporting capacity, workforce planning, and operational readiness for both county and community-based organizations.

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INNOVATION

From its inception, CBHA has passionately worked towards positioning California at the forefront of behavioral health innovations. Initiatives like Proposition 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 and Telehealth:** Leveraging technology to offer remote treatment, reaching individuals who might not have access to in-person services. CBHA supports fair reimbursement parity for telehealth, investments in broadband infrastructure, and innovative hybrid care models that combine virtual and in-person services to maximize accessibility and continuity of care.
- **Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI):** Implementing strategies to detect and address behavioral health challenges at the earliest stages. CBHA will advocate for expanded funding for evidence-based school programs, early childhood interventions and public awareness campaigns that emphasize prevention and reduce long-term costs by addressing needs before crises occur.
- **Physical and Behavioral Health Integration:** Combining physical and mental health services for a comprehensive approach to wellbeing. Integration efforts should include co-located services, shared care plans, and incentives for collaboration between primary care and behavioral health providers. CBHA will work to ensure payment models support integrated care, particularly in safety net and community-based settings.
- **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. CBHA will prioritize alignment between mobile crisis teams, 988 call centers, and county behavioral health departments to ensure consistency and avoid service gaps. Sustainable funding streams are essential to ensure these programs move beyond pilot phases.
- **Data Systems and Sharing:** Supporting standardized data collection efforts that track disparities, ensuring transparency and accountability in addressing them. CBHA will promote the adoption of interoperable systems that allow providers across counties and sectors to share information securely. Improved data integration will strengthen care coordination, outcomes measurement, and equity tracking.
- **Protected Patient Information and Data Sharing:** CBHA will advocate for policies that balance patient privacy protections with the need for providers to access timely information. Updates to HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2 regulations should ensure sensitive data is safeguarded while allowing critical care coordination for individuals with complex needs.



- **Data Compatibility for Providers and Billers:** Many community-based organizations struggle with outdated billing and data platforms that are not interoperable with county or state systems. CBHA will push for investments in modernized systems, technical assistance for smaller providers, and state-level alignment of billing requirements to reduce administrative burdens.
- **Advance Digital Equity for Behavioral Health Clients:** Promote digital access initiatives that ensure clients can fully benefit from telehealth and emerging digital therapeutics. Advocate for device programs, connectivity subsidies, and digital literacy supports to close the digital divide and strengthen client engagement.

## EMERGING TRENDS AND PRACTICE INNOVATIONS

As behavioral health needs and technologies evolve, CBHA members continue to lead in adopting innovative, evidence-based practices. Advances such as artificial intelligence, digital therapeutics, telehealth, and neurofeedback are transforming how care is delivered. CBHA supports policies that ensure these tools are implemented ethically, equitably, and with appropriate safeguards for privacy and quality. By embracing innovation while preserving human connection, California can expand access, improve outcomes, and sustain progress in behavioral health care.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Behavioral Health:** AI tools can help providers detect behavioral health needs earlier through predictive analytics, automate administrative tasks to reduce provider burden, and personalize care plans using real-time data. CBHA supports the ethical use of AI, ensuring transparency, data security, and equitable outcomes while safeguarding patient privacy.
- **Psychedelic Research:** As California and the federal government consider policies related to psychedelics, CBHA will advocate for rigorous research, clinical safety standards, and culturally competent implementation. Psychedelics show promise in treating conditions such as PTSD, depression, and substance use disorders, but clear regulatory frameworks and provider training are necessary to integrate these treatments responsibly.
- **Telehealth Modalities:** Telehealth has become a cornerstone of access, particularly for rural and underserved communities. CBHA will advocate for permanent reimbursement parity for telehealth services, cross-state licensing flexibility, and investments in digital infrastructure to ensure equitable access to high-quality virtual care.
- **Digital Therapeutics:** Evidence-based apps and digital platforms are emerging as tools for mental health self-management and early intervention. CBHA will support pathways to integrate digital therapeutics into the behavioral health system, including coverage by Medi-Cal and commercial insurers, to expand access to innovative care options.

- **Biofeedback and Neurofeedback:** These evidence-based practices empower individuals to regulate stress, anxiety, and other behavioral health conditions by making physiological processes visible and trainable. CBHA will advocate for research funding, workforce training, and reimbursement models that allow community-based providers to incorporate these tools into care delivery.

## 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 Carli Stelzer at [cstelzer@calbha.org](mailto:cstelzer@calbha.org) to get in touch. Together, let's shape a brighter, healthier future for our state.

A woman with long dark hair is speaking into a microphone. The image is partially covered by a teal overlay on the left side.

*Advocacy.*

A man in a suit is speaking into a microphone, gesturing with his hands. The image is partially covered by a teal overlay on the right side.

*Connection.*

A man in a suit is speaking into a microphone, gesturing with his hands. The image is partially covered by a teal overlay on the left side.

*Results.*