

From the ED's Corner

Paul Curtis, Executive Director

In our efforts to stay connected to our members and the community, as well as keep you updated on CBHA's programming and operations activities, I'll be sharing my thoughts moving forward in this new blog but this one will focus on our first conference!

BHCalCon, our new statewide conference that was open to members and the general public, was by all accounts a great success! This was a big undertaking for CBHA and our staff of five and planning and development had been in the works for over a year. We sold out the week prior to the conference and had over 200 attendees. There were over 15 vendors in attendance as well, sharing information on their innovative programs and services that are available to agencies and providers in our state. Feedback has been very positive, and we are very grateful for the support of our sponsors, including our Presenting Sponsor, Kaiser Permanente, along with Open Minds, Qualifacts, Nonstop Wellness and Each Mind Matters. I also want to thank our amazing Event Coordinator, Kevin Cohee, who did a wonderful job of pulling in all the various elements of the conference together. The overall program, which consisted of four general sessions and 30 workshops over two days was the result of a lot of hard work from CBHA staff, Program Committee and Board volunteers, as well as the collaboration of our amazing California behavioral health community partners that jumped right in to be a part of it. Our goal was to create a statewide conference that touches on all aspects of behavioral health within California's healthcare system, and to create an environment of collaboration among all the various groups involved in the system.

The first day kicked off in the morning with a keynote speech from Deputy Director of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services, Dr. Kelly Pfeifer of the Department of Health Care Services. She shared a lot of great information about the new efforts DHCS is undertaking, including the upcoming 1115 and 1915b Waiver renewals, and the integration of the mental health and substance use disorder treatment systems. She also acknowledged ongoing issues such as administrative burden, the wide variation in county rules and practices, data sharing and payment. Overall, her message focused on what DHCS and the behavioral health community can do in working together to address these issues going forward. Chuck Ingoglia, the new CEO for the National Council for Behavioral Health followed Dr. Pfeifer. Chuck focused on what is happening at the federal level and shared information about the new campaign called "United for Behavioral Health", and how now is the time to make a real and lasting difference in our country. He discussed the top priorities for the National Council, including Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs), the federal response to the addiction crisis, workforce development, parity, and Mental Health First Aid. The afternoon of the first day featured a panel focused on the intersection of behavioral health providers and the homelessness crisis facing our state. The second morning CBHA Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Dr. Le Ondra Clark Harvey lead a panel on Innovative Strategies for School Based Mental Health Programs. Finally, Monica Oss, CEO of *OPEN MINDS*, closed the conference with a presentation on the changing marketplace for behavioral health care providers, both at the national level and then specifically the challenges facing providers here in our state.

The staff and Board are still processing feedback and gathering input on what worked and what can be done differently in the future. It is our hope there will be a BHCalCon 2020 but a final decision in that area is still down the road. If you attended the conference and still have thoughts or ideas to share, [please take part in the survey we sent](#) or feel free to reach out to us. Be on the lookout for more news in this area in the next couple of months!



Thank you for your continued support of CBHA!
Paul Curtis
Executive Director