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# THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

INVESTING IN CHANGING LIVES & PROMOTING HEALTH



## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

February 2020

### Crisis Services on Campus

#### BHI Opens Long-Awaited Unit



In December 2019, the Crisis Stabilization Unit [CSU] officially opened its doors.

County Manager Julie Morgas Baca, strongly supports the program and remarked that it was filling a major gap, **“Having a loved one who is in crisis can make you feel so helpless, through this center and all the wrap around services, there is help,”** she said. **“Thanks to the support and efforts of so many, Bernalillo County will be able to offer these critical services to individuals and their family members. We are so grateful to our steadfast partners at UNM.”**

Thirty clients have accessed services since the launch of the program. The Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) is a specialized treatment facility

designed for those individuals in the midst of a mental health crisis who are not suicidal and/or homicidal. Services provided by the CSU are designed for individuals whose coping skills have been temporarily eclipsed by life events.

**“At any time, a community member experiencing a behavioral health crisis is taken to the emergency department. There, providers evaluate them and determine if they are in need continued care on an inpatient basis. More often than not, patients do not meet the criteria for admission and are sent home,”** said Bernalillo County's Department of Behavioral Health Services Director, Margarita Chavez-Sanchez. **“Now community members can get a referral from the University of New Mexico Hospital, come to our Crisis Stabilization Unit, and immediately start working with our team to stabilize.”**

CSU services include: case management services to develop long-term supports and/or entry into further treatment; group sessions which focus on coping skills, mood management, distress tolerance; and therapeutic art activities.

***Right now only referrals from UNM Health Sciences Psychiatric Center are being accepted. UNM Psych should contact Bernalillo County Clinical Administration at (505) 252-9473 to connect a patient to the CSU.***

# New Director of Behavioral Health Services

## County Manager Appoints New Director



Bernalillo County Manager Julie Morgas Baca announced that Margarita Chavez-Sanchez is the new director for the County's Department of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS), effective December 4, 2019.

Her resume includes a graduate fellowship in Washington D.C. with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, policy work through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, working in the Presbyterian Hospital Emergency Room, and years of work dedicated to promoting health and wellness for the University of New Mexico and Bernalillo County. Chavez-Sanchez graduated magna cum laude from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor's degree in university studies and summa cum laude with a Master of Science in community health.

**"I'm so honored to continue the critical work we're doing at DBHS and so appreciative of the leadership and mentorship I received from our former Director, Katrina Hotrum-Lopez,"** says Director Margarita Chavez-Sanchez. **"We have an amazing team, comprised of passionate and dedicated individuals who are intensely focused on delivering treatment solutions to individuals living with a mental health condition or an addiction. Together with our partners and service providers we are changing lives and I couldn't be prouder."**

The DBHS oversees the Behavioral Health Initiative and operations at the CARE Campus (formerly MATS), which provides a range of services including: seven substance abuse programs, the Crisis Stabilization Unit, and DWI services. Collectively over 30,000 people receive services each year, through these efforts.

Margarita Chavez-Sanchez was one of the first county employees assigned to help establish the Behavioral Health Initiative, and she has played a major role in all of the milestones and successes achieved by the department so far.

Former Behavioral Health Services Director Katrina Hotrum-Lopez took a new job as cabinet secretary for the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department in August. Chavez-Sanchez, a former special projects coordinator and assistant director of the Department of Behavioral Health Services, served as interim director for DBHS the last four months

Chavez-Sanchez has more than a decade of experience working in the public health sector.

## Q&A with Nathaniel Ortiz

### 6-Month Program Participant



**What was a challenge you had when you first started the program?**

Staying. It was a challenge to adjust to this new life style of rules and structure.

**What was your motivation to start the road the recovery?**

I was stuck in a cycle of lying, stealing, and cheating. I was tired of heading down the bad path and needed to make a change for myself and my future.

**What advice would you give to somebody starting the program?**

Stay true to yourself – everybody who comes in has a purpose. Whether it's getting your family back together or getting your overall life back together, stick with the program, and you will succeed.

This program offers you the tools to have a successful recovery and your attitude will change you before you know it, you have achieved some big milestones.

# Community Highlight

## Cleaning Up Our Streets - Needle Pickup



Since the beginning of used syringe pickup training and outreach, in the International District by members of the International District Healthy

Often during outreach, staff and volunteers are approached by community members to thank us for the outreach in their neighborhood. Some community members are persons with substance use disorder, who ask for clean and sterile equipment and kits of naloxone (Narcan) for overdose reversals. Naloxone kits are available during outreach and information on available syringe exchange services are provided to community members.

Communities Coalition, local resources have stepped up to join in a collaborative effort to address and resolve the public safety and public health issues faced by our community members with substance use disorders. Now, after two years of outreach in the collection of used and discarded syringes in the county, the Department of Behavioral Health Services, Community Needle Pickup Services, has regularly scheduled outreach every two weeks. The location, date, and time are posted on the webpage for the BernCo Department of Behavioral Health Services [www.bernco.gov/dbhs](http://www.bernco.gov/dbhs).

Fortunately, the used syringe pickup training and outreach is a part of the collaborative response to substance use disorder in our community. City and County departments join DBHS and community groups, to share information for outreach locations, dates, and syringe disposal resources. DBHS is working on enhancing our current webpage for Needle Pickup and Needle Mapping to provide more information on outreach events and updates on syringe drop off box locations.

These outreach sites include: schools, community centers, parks, open spaces, alleys, drainage ditches, and roads where discarded syringes are reported or in areas where syringes have been collected previously. At each outreach event, a short training on safe disposal methods, how to recognize where public injection occurs, and safety issues are reviewed with participants who volunteer to assist with needle pickup. New outreach volunteers and staff are paired with others with more experience in this type of outreach.

Outreach for December 2019 and January 2020 were conducted in the downtown area at Wells Park and Coronado Park, the west side along Central Avenue and Estancia, in the International District at Mesa Verde Community Center, in the south valley near Armijo and Lopez Road, and at Hawthorne School as part of a collaboration of syringe outreach providers to clean up the school. Total outreach for the two months resulted in the collection of 909 needle syringes.

**For more information, contact Mark Clark, Public Health Specialist, at (505) 468-1664 or [mclark@bernco.gov](mailto:mclark@bernco.gov).**

### Training & Education Expansion

The BHI has expanded the training and education resources available in the community. The BHI has awarded \$1 million to community providers for training & education programs.

The trainings offered include: brain injury support groups, training for first responders and school staff to identify and respond to signs of trauma in children, cultural competencies for black New Mexicans with mental health needs, empathic listening, mindfulness, and family-to-family programs. These are just a handful of the services that these providers are able to offer to the community at no cost. The providers for this project include: ARCA, All Faiths, New Mexico Black Mental Health Coalition, New Mexico Motivational Interviewing Training Center, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

**"We are committed to providing these crucial social service trainings to the community while working with other Behavioral Health Initiative partners. I am proud and happy that we are continuing to expand into different parts of Bernalillo County to ensure that all people have access to services,"** said Vice Chair Commissioner Charlene Pyskoty.

### \$10 Million in Community Support

The Bernalillo County Department of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) has asked the community of providers to submit proposals on ways to address gaps in the behavioral health continuum. These proposals included requests for one-time dollars for capital, start up or expansion of services. This opportunity provides an avenue for Bernalillo County community providers to apply for funding that will expand their currently existing services or develop new behavioral health services. On November 6, 2019, DBHS and Bernalillo County Purchasing hosted a mandatory meeting for the applicants and had a great turnout.

# Bulletin Board




**May 18-20, 2020**  
**Breaking Barriers**



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## Our Partners

