



**988-Crisis
Policy Advisory Group
Member Bios**



Ryan Banks

CEO

Turning Point of Central California, Inc.

Ryan Banks has served in managerial and leadership positions at Turning Point of Central California for over 20 years. Turning Point has operated various social service programs in California since 1970. Mr. Banks is the Chief Executive Officer overseeing almost 50 programs, serving 12,000 people annually. He has many years of experience working in direct service and management roles serving adult homeless, mental health, substance use disorder, and justice-involved populations.

Mr. Banks has received extensive training in mental health crisis assessment and response, including Mental Health First Aid, the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk (RRSR-MH), and was a certified trainer for Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) and Professional Assault Crisis Training (Pro-ACT). Mr. Banks has professional experience responding to mental health crises, including working directly with first responders, law enforcement, crisis response teams, and psychiatric hospitals and health facilities. He has participated in critical Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) projects with county and community partners to identify gaps and solutions to enhance preventative and post-crisis interventions.

Ryan earned a Master of Public Administration degree and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from California State University, Fresno.



Nancy Bargmann
Director
California Department of Developmental Services

Nancy Bargmann was reappointed Director of the California Department of Developmental Services by Governor Gavin Newsom in March 2020, where she has served in that position since 2016. The Department assists over 420,000 Californians with intellectual/developmental disabilities with opportunities to lead more inclusive and independent lives which reflect their needs, choices and values.

Nancy started her career in the field of developmental disabilities as a direct service professional and then as a regional center service coordinator working with children who are at risk for or have a developmental disability, and their families. She has held a variety of leadership positions at California's regional centers, as a service provider, with a non-profit housing corporation, and at the Department of Developmental Services.

Nancy earned a Master of Science degree in social work from San Diego State University, and a Master of Business Administration degree from the Pepperdine University School of Business and Management.

Nancy is committed to supporting access and breaking down barriers to services, and choices in quality supports for individuals who have intellectual/developmental disabilities, and their families.



Kirsten Barlow
Vice President, Policy
California Hospital Association

Kirsten joined the California Hospital Association as Vice President, Policy in December 2021, where she manages behavioral health policy issues. Over the three prior years, Kirsten established an independent consulting practice providing policy, finance, and strategic expertise to clients, including: Aurrera Health Group; the National Alliance of Mental Illness – California; California Public Administrators, Public Guardians, and Public Conservators Association; California Hospital Association; Hospital Association of Southern California; and Hospital Council of Northern and Central California.

Prior roles during her career have included serving as lead lobbyist and then Executive Director for the County Behavioral Health Directors Association, Executive Officer at the Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health, and policy and communications positions at the California Department of Mental Health, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, and the California Assembly Human Services Committee in the State Legislature.

Kirsten has a Master of Social Welfare (MSW) degree from the University of California at Berkeley, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.



Elizabeth Basnett
Director
California Emergency Medical Services Authority
(EMSA)

Elizabeth “Liz” Basnett, of Sacramento, was appointed Director of the California Emergency Medical Services Authority in August 2023, where she has been Acting Director since 2021. Basnett was Chief Resilience Officer at the California Health and Human Services Agency from 2020 to 2021 and a Senior Managing Associate at Hagerty Consulting from 2018 to 2020. She was Chief of Planning and Preparedness at the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency from 2017 to 2018. She was a Disaster Preparedness Program Representative for the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services from 2016 to 2017 and Deputy Director for the Callaway County Emergency Management Agency from 2012 to 2016. Basnett earned an Executive Master of Professional Studies degree in Emergency and Disaster Management from Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from the University of Missouri.



Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Assembly Member (AD-16)/Author of AB 988
California State Assembly

Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan was first elected to represent Assembly District 16 in the California State Assembly in 2018, which includes

Alamo, Danville, Dublin, Lafayette, Livermore, Moraga, Orinda, Pleasanton, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek.

Rebecca is an accomplished attorney, environmental advocate, community volunteer, law professor, and mother. A Bay Area native, she is the granddaughter of refugees who came to the United States to escape the Holocaust. Their experiences inspired her to use her career and personal time to help others in her community, solve complex problems, protect civil rights, and fight to ensure everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

As an attorney, Rebecca specialized in ensuring major corporations complied with environmental laws and regulations by leading internal investigations to improve their environmental practices, while maintaining profitability. She also worked with major tech companies on intellectual property cases involving such topics as copyright, trademark, and trade secret theft.

Rebecca oversaw and grew her office's pro bono program, and, under her leadership, the office expanded its efforts to include civil rights, immigration, homelessness, and domestic violence. She has also served on several boards and committees, helping attorneys throughout the Bay Area provide their services to those who desperately need them.

During her time in the Assembly, Rebecca has introduced and advocated for legislation that addresses some of the most pressing needs of our communities and her constituents. Her background as a technology attorney and her dedication to safeguarding reproductive rights are highlighted in her work as chair of the Privacy and Consumer Protection and as founder and chair of the Select Committee on Reproductive Health, respectively. She has

championed multiple bills to make California a safe place to live and a bastion for equal rights including protections from AI and the 988 Suicide and Crisis lifeline.

Rebecca is a product of Bay Area public schools and a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Georgetown University Law Center. Before serving in the Assembly, she taught appellate law and legal research and writing at Santa Clara University and Golden Gate University and often volunteered at her children's schools. She currently resides in Orinda with her husband, Darren, and their three children.



Phebe Bell
Behavioral Health Director
Nevada County

Phebe Bell, MSW, is the Director of Behavioral Health for Nevada County where she oversees mental health and substance use disorder services, including the crisis system. Phebe started her career running a suicide prevention crisis line and went on to work in a variety of crisis response services including a domestic violence and sexual assault agency. As a longtime resident of Nevada County, Phebe is particularly interested in crisis response in rural communities. And as a survivor of losing someone she loves to suicide, Phebe is deeply passionate about creating compassionate and effective crisis response systems.



John Boyd
Vice President Behavioral Health and Wellness
Kaiser Permanente, NCAL

John Boyd has been Chief Executive Officer at the Sutter Solano Medical Center and at the Sutter Center for Psychiatry since 2014 and has been regional executive for behavioral health at the Sutter Health Sacramento Sierra Region since 2014, where he was chief administrative officer of regional behavioral health and continuing care from 2008 to 2014. Boyd was assistant administrator at the Kaiser Permanente Sacramento Medical Center from 2007 to 2008 and held several positions at Shriners Hospitals for Children from 1999 to 2006, including Western Region director of development. He served as a member of the Sacramento Planning and Design Commission from 2004 to 2008. Boyd is a fellow at the American College of Healthcare Executives.

He earned a Doctor of Psychology degree from the California School of Professional Psychology and a Master of Health Administration degree from the University of Southern California.



Rayshell Chambers
Commission Member
Mental Health Services Oversight & Accountability
Commission (MHSOAC)

Rayshell Chambers has been Co-Executive Director and Chief Operations Officer at Painted Brain since 2016. She was Program Analyst III at Special Service for Groups from 2011 to 2018. Chambers held several positions at the City of Los Angeles Human Services Department and Commission on the Status of Women from 2006 to 2010, including Legislative Coordinator and Community Outreach Coordinator. She earned a Master of Public Administration degree in public policy and administration from California State University, Long Beach.

Commissioner Chambers represents clients and consumers.



Kenna Chic
Former President of Project Lighthouse
California Health Care Foundation

Kenna Chic currently works in health philanthropy, focusing on behavioral health and health equity. She previously worked on health and disability policy in the U.S. Congress, the National Institutes of Health, and Disability Rights California. As the president of Project Lighthouse, Kenna executed an online anonymous peer support system to provide individuals with support in navigating local mental health resources. She has been a mental health advocate at the local, state, and national level for over a decade, dedicating her work towards removing societal barriers that people with mental health struggles and various disabilities encounter.

With her passion for change-making heightened by her professional experiences, Kenna has also served on multiple advisory boards, task forces, and fellowships in various organizations, including the Mental Health Strategic Impact Initiative, Mental Health America, and the Coelho Center for Disability, Law, Policy, and Innovation. As a voting member of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Behavioral Health Integration Task Force, she worked on integrating behavioral health and primary care services, promoted the importance of peer support and expansion of mental health services in underserved populations, and voted to increase COVID-19 congressional relief funding for telehealth grant programs.



Bianca Christian
Associate Therapist
California Coalition for Youth

Bianca Christian has been working in mental health settings of varying kinds for over 10 years. She holds a Master's in Social Work as well as BAs in Psychology and History. In her free time, Bianca likes to play video games and watch a variety of shows, Bianca also enjoys singing and received classical vocal training for a few years. Bianca is also a bit of a foodie and enjoys wine tasting.



Le Ondra Clark Harvey
Chief Executive Director
California Council of Community Behavioral Health
Agencies (CBHA)

Dr. Clark Harvey is a psychologist and the Chief Executive Officer of the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies a statewide advocacy organization representing mental health and substance use disorder non-profit agencies that collectively serve over 750 thousand Californians annually. She is also the Executive Director of the California Access Coalition- a group of advocacy organizations and pharmaceutical industry companies that advocates for patient access to behavioral health treatment. Dr. Clark Harvey has previously served as Chief Consultant to the California State Assembly Committee on Business and Professions, Principal Consultant to the Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development, and a health policy consultant to the office of former Senator Curren D. Price, Jr.

Prior to her work within the California Legislature, she completed her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She completed her pre-doctoral fellowship at the University of Southern California Children's Hospital Los Angeles and a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles Mattel Children's Hospital.

Dr. Clark Harvey has maintained an impressive record of leadership including serving on national and local boards including the American Psychological Association (APA), and prior positions on the Association of Black Psychologists, Sacramento County Public Health Advisory Board and the Sacramento County Children's Coalition. Dr. Clark Harvey has received numerous awards and in 2020, was appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom to his Master Plan on Aging Advisory Committee and the Behavioral Health Task Force. In 2021, she was appointed by California Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis to the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine Board.



Chad Costello
Executive Director
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
(CASRA)

Chad has more than twenty-five years of service in the non-profit sector of California's Public Behavioral Health System. In addition to many years of working in legislative and administrative advocacy, Chad has experience ranging from direct practice, team supervision and program development, to curriculum design, training, and teaching. Chad became CASRA's Executive Director in August of 2021.

Chad began working directly for CASRA in January 2021 as its Public Policy Director, after almost 20 years of work for Mental Health America of Los Angeles, first as a director of a care coordination team at its renowned Village ISA in Long Beach. This was followed with positions as the organization's Public Policy Director and most recently as the Vice President of Policy. Prior to MHALA, Chad served as the Director of Programs for MHA Orange County overseeing a range of programs serving individuals experiencing homelessness, including MHAOC's AB 2034 program, which focused on adults who were unhoused and experienced behavioral health issues.

CASRA is a statewide provider association whose non-profit members contract for a range of behavioral health services with 25 counties in California. The Association focuses its efforts on shaping and supporting policies that promote recovery and create alternatives to locked/involuntary care. CASRA's member organizations pioneered the development of crisis residential treatment in California and currently provide this level of care in 11 counties. In addition, CASRA member organizations provide peer respite, urgent care, crisis stabilization, and mobile crisis outreach services and a range of residential and outpatient services. Several CASRA member agencies are also part of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline network. CASRA is a member of the Crisis Residential Association.

Chad has extensive experience in both in-person and virtual training and has presented at the local, state and national levels on topics including advocacy skills, crisis intervention, and practice in psychiatric rehabilitation (PSR). He has held a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) certification since 2001 and is a certified MORS trainer and Mental Health First Aid Instructor. He has taught at the A.A., B.A. and graduate levels for many years, and currently instructs in PSR in the Cerritos College Mental Health Worker Program, and in policy practice, community development, and leadership in the School of Social Work at California State University, Long Beach.

Chad received his MSW, with a specialization in Community Organization, Planning and Administration from the University of Southern California and his B.A. in Social Ecology from the University of California, Irvine. Chad has an adult daughter and counts backcountry skiing, backpacking, climbing and photography as his passions.



Erika Cristo
Assistant Deputy Director
California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)

Erika Cristo is an Assistant Deputy Director (ADD) for Behavioral Health at the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). In this role, Erika serves as the policy lead for all crisis continuum of care initiatives and proposals and behavioral health policy related to improving care for children and youth, particularly for children in the child welfare system. Erika also serves as DHCS' behavioral health lead on efforts to improve the quality of behavioral health data reporting and use and provides leadership support for the DHCS Community Services and Licensing & Certification Divisions related to departmental priorities in these areas.

Erika has over 20 years of State of California experience in the behavioral health field. She began her state career as an Associate Mental Health Specialist with the former Department of Mental Health, and has worked in various analyst, specialist, and management capacities since then. Prior to her ADD role, Erika was the Branch Chief overseeing the Program Policy, Legislation, and Regulations Branch in the DHCS Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Services Division, where she was responsible for overseeing teams analyzing, developing, and implementing policy related to the Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems, including DHCS' CalAIM Behavioral Health initiatives.

Erika earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of California, Davis, which solidified her desire to pursue a career in public service.



Jessica Cruz
Chief Executive Officer
NAMI – California

Jessica Cruz is the current CEO of NAMI California. Jessica has dedicated her career to fighting for better mental health care and increased awareness of mental illness. Jessica previously worked as the Political Action Committee Administrator for the California Hospital Association and the Director of Media Outreach for the California Broadcasters Association. Jessica is a passionate advocate for mental health care reform and has worked tirelessly to improve access to mental health services in California.

Jessica Cruz's educational career includes a Master's in Public Administration from the University of San Francisco, a Bachelor's in Mass Communication from California State University-Sacramento, and general education courses from American River College.



Budge Currier

**Assistant Director, Public Safety Communications
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
(CalOES)**

Since 2011 Budge has served with the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES). In his current role, Budge is responsible for the statewide public safety radio systems and microwave network that supports state agencies, the 9-1-1 system that supports 438 Public Safety Answering Points with over 27 million 9-1-1 calls per year, the 9-8-8 system, and the Emergency Communications Division. Budge also serves as the California Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC).

Budge has over 30 years of communication's experience and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from University of Michigan and a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. Budge is a member of NENA, APCO, and NCSWIC. Budge also serves as the Past President of the National Association of State 9-1-1 Administrators (NASNA).



Susan DeMarois
Director
California Department of Aging (CDA)

Susan DeMarois was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom to serve as Director of the California Department of Aging effective November 1, 2021. As Director, Ms. DeMarois is committed to stakeholder engagement; equity and inclusion; and system transformation to prepare our state for the year 2030 when one in four Californians will be aged 60 or older.

Prior to joining CDA, Director DeMarois led public policy and advocacy for the national Alzheimer's Association in California, serving as the nonprofit organization's registered lobbyist in Sacramento where she advocated for legislative, budget, and regulatory changes at the state capitol. The organization led the effort to enact the first dementia early detection initiative in the nation focused on the Medicaid population: SB 48 (Limón) signed into law by Governor Newsom.

Ms. DeMarois served as an appointee to Governor Newsom's Alzheimer's Prevention and Preparedness Task Force, chaired by former First Lady Maria Shriver, in addition to the Master Plan for Aging Stakeholder Advisory Committee, a workgroup established by Executive Order. In addition, she represented the Alzheimer's Association on the CalHHS Agency Secretary's Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Advisory Committee.

Before working for the Alzheimer's Association, Ms. DeMarois led government and community relations for the UC Davis Health System where she gained deep health policy and clinical workforce experience. Early in her career, she worked for LeadingAge California, the professional trade association representing not-for-profit housing, residential care, and skilled nursing providers.

A graduate of CSU Chico, Director DeMarois started her career working for the U.S. Congress and California State Assembly. She is a proud mom to two adult

daughters and draws inspiration for her work from her own mom's experience with dementia.



Michelle Doty Cabrera
Executive Director
County Behavioral Health Directors Association
(CBHDA)

Michelle Doty Cabrera joined CBHDA as Executive Director in May 2019. Prior to joining CBHDA she served as the Healthcare Director for the California State

Council of the Services Employees International Union (SEIU California), where she advocated on behalf of healthcare workers and consumers, including SEIU California's county behavioral health workforce, on issues related to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Health Equity, Health4All, and cost containment, among others. She served as a Senior Consultant for the Assembly Human Services Committee, where she specialized in child welfare issues and staffed legislation which extended foster care in California to age 21. Ms. Cabrera also served as a Program Officer for the California Healthcare Foundation, working as a liaison on state health policy in Sacramento.

Ms. Cabrera served as a member of Governor Newsom's Council of Regional Homeless Advisors and was recently appointed to the California Disability and Aging Community Living Advisory Committee, representing the needs of individuals with behavioral health conditions. Ms. Cabrera has been an inaugural member of the National Quality Forum's Standing Committee on Disparities and has served on the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN) Board of Directors since 2015. She earned her B.S.F.S. in International Politics from Georgetown University.



Tara Gamboa-Eastman
Director of Government Affairs
Steinberg Institute

Tara is an accomplished advocate with a deep commitment to ensuring equitable access to behavioral health care. During her time at the Institute, she was the lead advocate for AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan, 2022) to implement the 988 crisis care continuum in California.

Before coming to the Steinberg Institute, Tara worked in the California legislature on issues related to economic justice, housing, homelessness, and human services.

Tara holds a bachelor's degree in political science from UC Berkeley and a Master's of Public Policy from Harvard University.



Brenda Grealish
Executive Officer
Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health
(CCJBH)

Brenda Grealish is currently the Executive Officer on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health (CCJBH), which is part of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). In this role, Ms. Grealish supports 12 esteemed Councilmembers and leads a team of passionate individuals in an effort to end the criminalization of individuals with behavioral health needs by supporting proven strategies that promote early intervention, access to effective treatments, a planned re-entry and the preservation of public safety. She brings to this role her public policy and administration experience from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), where she offered her expertise in several positions including Chief of the former Mental Health Services Division, Assistant Deputy and Acting Deputy Director for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services, and Chief of the Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division. She also served in several research positions in CDCR's Office of Research, including Deputy Director and Research Manager II & III levels. The intersection of Ms. Grealish's experience between CDCR and DHCS, in particular, makes her a dynamic Executive Officer for CCJBH, and her high energy, ability to effectively make connections between multiple public systems and extensive knowledge of state service, along with her high regard for and reliance on the expertise of individuals with lived experience, help to shape and improve public systems for individuals with behavioral health needs who are, or at risk of becoming, justice system involved.



Taun Hall
Executive Director
The Miles Hall Foundation

The day Taun Hall's son Miles was shot and killed, she stepped into her life's work: Creating change to protect families from a system that failed her son.

Since June 2, 2019, Taun has worked tirelessly with her husband Scott and daughter Alexis, to not only promote awareness of the problems embedded in the care for those living with mental illness, but to identify where the levers of change are. Since Miles's death, The Miles Hall Foundation was created. The mission is:

To support and protect families by educating communities about mental illness and by protecting those suffering with mental illness from excessive use of force by law enforcement.

Her work is supported by the FRIENDS OF SCOTT, ALEXIS AND TAUN HALL, and JUSTICE FOR MILES HALL, which have volunteers and supporters from all over the country. She is an advocate and Co-Sponsor for The Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act - AB 988 which was signed into California legislation on September 2022. This legislation provides an alternative number to 911 that involves trained mental health professionals, and a mobile crisis response team that doesn't involve the police.

She is an advocate of The Miles Hall Crisis Hub, which is 24/7 as of December 1, 2023 and provides mental health services in Contra Costa County, and is staffed with licensed behavioral health clinicians and peers with lived experience who will triage calls, de-escalate situations, and dispatch mobile crisis teams.

Taun formed alliances with other families, organizations, and politicians across the country who are working for change. She is a featured speaker and panelist on media and public and private events.

Her message: Black lives matter, Black minds matter, her son Miles matters, and change is possible and inevitable.



Jeffrey Hebert
Communications Coordinator
San Diego County Sheriff's Department

Jeff is an experienced public safety professional with extensive background in 9-1-1 and public safety dispatch operations.

Jeff has worked for the San Diego County Sheriff's Department for over 28 years. He began his career as an Emergency Services Dispatcher with the Sheriff's Department. As a dispatcher, he answered countless 9-1-1 calls, collecting vital information from callers reporting emergencies, and coordinated the response of first responders to law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical calls for service. As Jeff continued to progress in his career, he promoted to dispatch supervisor overseeing day-to-day shift operations.

In 2007, Jeff was appointed to the position of Communications Coordinator, becoming responsible for managing the systems, personnel, and overall operations of the Communications Center for the San Diego County Sheriff's Department. He is a 9-1-1 County Coordinator for the County of San Diego and is involved in several groups and committees working to improve public safety and the emergency services provided to members of the community in San Diego County.

From 2005 to 2018, Jeff was president of the San Diego Association of Public Safety Dispatchers, a non-profit organization. The association developed and delivered training courses to public safety dispatch personnel that were certified by the California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST).

A skilled presenter and instructor, he regularly teaches courses to public safety personnel on a variety of topics. Jeff teaches learning domains in the California POST Public Safety Dispatchers' Basic Course such as Professional Orientation,

Criminal Justice System, Introduction to Law, and Critical Incidents. He also teaches several continuing education courses on topics such as interoperable radio communications, digital privacy, and cybersecurity.

Jeff has completed undergraduate course work in the field of Emergency and Disaster Management and holds numerous certifications related to public safety communications and emergency management.

Jeff is a member of the following professional associations and groups:

- San Diego Law Enforcement Assistance Network communications working group, *Chair*
- California State Interoperability Executive Committee (CALSIEC), *Member*
- CALSIEC Southern Planning Area, *Co-chair*
- California 9-8-8 Technical Advisory Board, *Member*
- Southern California NG9-1-1 Regional Task Force, *Member*
- National Emergency Number Association (NENA), *Member*
- Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO), *Member*



Roberto Herrera
Deputy Secretary, Veterans Services Division
California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)

Roberto C. Herrera Jr. was appointed Deputy Secretary of Veterans Services by Governor Gavin Newsom on October 10, 2023. He has served in several key positions at CalVet since 2014 including the oversight, design, and strategy of CalVet's mental health, housing, and supportive service programs, CalVet's District Offices, and the accreditation of California's County Veteran Service Offices.

Roberto's prior experience also includes the development of the California Transition Assistance Program, Justice Involved Veteran Initiative, and the Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program.

Roberto was a Scientific Applications Specialist (9S100) in the U.S. Air Force from 2008 to 2012, ultimately attaining the rank of Senior Airman. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of California, Davis and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of San Francisco.



Melissa Lawton
Chief Program Officer
Seneca Family of Agencies

Melissa Lawton has been with Seneca Family of Agencies for over a decade, positively impacting services for youth and families and focusing on creating an inclusive, sustainable workplace. Prior to becoming a therapist, Melissa served as an officer in the US Army and as a manager in transportation and logistics in New York City and the Bay Area. She also trained as a firefighter and EMT and worked in Alameda and Mendocino counties.

Melissa joined Seneca as a clinician in the Bay Area in 2012 and worked in several crisis and community-based programs as a clinician and program leader. In 2021, she moved to overseeing the full continuum of Santa Clara County programs. She is currently Seneca's Chief Program Officer supporting community-based programs in Santa Clara, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Orange, and Riverside Counties. She also supports placement and permanency programs and Kaiser partnerships throughout California.

Melissa has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the US Military Academy and a master's degree in counseling from San Francisco State University. She resides in Oakland, CA, and enjoys riding motorcycles, bicycles, roller skating, and listening to true crime podcasts in her free time.



Robb Layne
Executive Director
California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program
Executive, Inc (CAADPE)

Robb Layne is the Executive Director of the California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives (CAADPE), the only state-wide association representing all types of substance use disorder services. In this role, Robb transformed the association into a vital player in the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) policy arena, grew the association's financial position and created a wider political footprint for his members.

Robb graduated from the University of California, Davis, and began a career bridging multiple industries. Bookending where he started to where he is now, Robb spent over ten years in the California State Assembly and California State Senate as legislative and committee staff. After leaving the Capitol, he was recruited to work as an executive team member at Partnership HealthPlan of California. After three years with Partnership, he was asked to join the County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California. He rebranded the organization, increased its exposure, and enhanced its reputation at the State Capitol.

Both in his role as the Executive Director of CAADPE and as a parent of a son with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), Robb currently sits on the California Health & Human Services Agency Behavioral Health Task Force (BHTF), the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) Workforce Committee and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation/ Council on Criminal Justice California Juvenile Justice Compendium and Toolkit Advisory Board.

Robb has sat on various community boards including the Sacramento LGBT Community Center and Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce Foundation. He currently is the co-president of the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region. He lives in Sacramento with his husband Marc Koenigsberg and their dog Riley.



Amanda Levy
Deputy Director, Health Policy and Stakeholder
Relations
California Department of Managed Health Care
(DMHC)

Amanda Levy is the Deputy Director of Health Policy and Stakeholder Relations, where she is responsible for fostering proactive and effective relations between the DMHC and its stakeholders, while serving as primary advisor to the Director on critical issues and providing strategic planning and policy direction on emerging issues and industry trends.

Prior to joining the DMHC, Amanda worked for the California Psychological Association (CPA), where she served as the Director of Government Affairs. As CPA's chief lobbyist, she coordinated policy positions, lobbying strategy, and grassroots outreach.



Dr. Jana Lord
Chief Operating Officer
Sycamores

Dr. Jana Lord is a Clinical Psychologist and has over 20 years of working within the field of mental health. At Sycamores she oversees Community Mental Health Services, Co-Occurring Services, Psychiatry, as well as operations including Project Management. Dr. Lord's role as COO is instrumental in identifying and implementing Sycamores' new lines of services, in alignment with the organization's mission and strategic plan. Dr. Lord led Sycamores' implementation of Mobile Crisis Outreach Team, in Los Angeles County. Dr. Lord's portfolio also includes the expansion of Sycamores' services into Riverside County. In 2022, Sycamores began to provide Outpatient mental health services, and by December 31st, 2023 will additionally provide Mobile Crisis Response Teams across the county. In addition to working for Sycamores since 2007, Dr. Lord has taught graduate courses on Law and Ethics, Interventions with Children and Adolescents, as well as on Psychological Testing. She has also been in private practice since 2004, specializing in loss and grief, anxiety, and navigating life transitions. Dr. Lord is seasoned in conducting training for mental health professionals throughout Los Angeles County in law and ethics, child abuse, crisis management, loss and grief, and differential diagnosis.

Dr. Lord received bachelor's degrees in Neuroscience and Psychology from Muskingum University in Ohio, and her master's and doctoral degrees at California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles, at Alliant International University.



Lee Ann Magoski
Director of Emergency Communications
County of Monterey

Since 2019, Lee Ann Magoski has been the Director of Emergency Communications Department for the County of Monterey (CA). She has worked at four agencies, starting from the dispatch console in 1996 and working her way to the Director's position. Throughout her career she has developed experience in operations, administration, and technology. She is an active member of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and stays current on industry trends through participation in working groups, committees, and conferences.

She served on the CALNENA Executive board from 2016 to 2022 and is a CALNENA Past President. During her tenure on the CALNENA board she became involved with legislative advocacy and in 2020 the legislation passed on state level to recognize Telecommunicators as First Responders. Lee Ann served as a California's 9-1-1 Advisory Board member from June 2018 to December 2022. Specific to 988, she worked as a stakeholder on Assembly Bill 988 to ensure that the perspective of 9-1-1 was provided; as well as did early presentations about 988 for 9-1-1 Dispatchers. Additionally, she is an active member of the NENA 911-988 Interactions workgroup and technical 988 subgroup since it began in late 2021.

Lee Ann has been Emergency Number Professional (ENP) certification since 2010 and received a bachelor's degree in management and a master's degree in leadership both from Saint Mary's College of California. In June 2023 she joined the NENA Executive Board and will be the NENA President in 2025.



Rhyan Miller
Behavioral Health Deputy Director
Integrated Programs
Riverside County

Rhyan is currently the BH Deputy Director for Integrated Programs at Riverside County Department of Behavioral Health. This division of BH encompasses the DMC ODS System of Care, BH Crisis Response System of Care, Behavioral Health Integration Programs, Criminal Justice Behavioral Health and Imbedded SUD/MH Programs in RUHS FQHC's and County Hospital ED, along with probation and DPSS sites. Rhyan has been in the Behavioral Health Field for the last 23 years.



Anete Millers
Director of Regulatory Affairs
California Association of Health Plans

Anete is the Director of Legal and Regulatory Affairs at the California Association of Health Plans (CAHP), a state trade association representing 44 public and private health care service plans that collectively provide coverage to over 28 million Californians. Anete's advocacy is informed by several years of managed care experience from the state level and from her time at CAHP, along with several years of legal education. Before joining CAHP, Anete was a Legal Analyst in the Division of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse at the California Office of the Attorney General, where she analyzed complex legal issues in health care fraud litigation.

Anete looks forward to joining the AB 988 Advisory Group and discussing how the state's efforts to implement a 24/7 crisis lifeline will connect to managed care. During her time at CAHP, a substantial portion of Anete's work has involved mental and behavioral health. From her participation in the DHCS Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) Fee Schedule Working Group to her engagement with health plans and regulators on the implementation of AB 988, SB 855, and SB 1338, Anete has had the opportunity to gain insight and expertise in a variety of areas tied to mental health services in California. Her work at CAHP has also touched on subjects like network adequacy and timely access to care, health equity and quality, claims payments, provider directories, and data exchange.

Juris Doctor, McGeorge School of Law, 2019 – Anete holds a Juris Doctor from McGeorge School of Law, where her concentration was Trial and Appellate Advocacy. In 2019 she graduated as a member of the nationally renowned Order of Barristers.



Ashley Mills

**Assistant Deputy Director, Community Wellness
California Department of Public Health (CDPH)**

Ashley Mills, MS is the Community Wellness Assistant Deputy Director within the Center for Healthy Communities at the Department of Public Health (CDPH).

In her role, Ms. Mills oversees the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch, which includes the Office of Suicide Prevention, the Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch, and the California Tobacco Prevention Program.

She also oversees the Center's Program Alignment, Communications, and Equity Section. Prior to joining CDPH, Ms. Mills held several positions with the Mental Health Services Oversight Accountability Commission, where she established and led the Commission's policy research team. From 2017 to 2019, she led the Commission's effort to develop a statewide strategic suicide prevention plan, which led to the creation of the Office of Suicide Prevention.



Keris Jän Myrick
Vice President of Partnerships
Inseparable (Mental Health Advocacy and Programs)

Keris Jän Myrick is a leading mental health advocate and executive, known for her innovative and inclusive approach to mental health reform and the public disclosure of her personal story (as featured in the New York Times series: Lives Restored). Ms. Myrick has over 15 years of experience in mental health services innovations, transformation, and peer workforce development. She is known for her collaborative style and innovative “whole person” approach to mental health.

Ms. Myrick is on the Board of California Disability Rights (DRC) and on the Mental Health of America board of directors. She is the developer and host of the podcast “Unapologetically Black Unicorns” focusing on mental health, race equity and lived experience. Ms. Myrick was formerly the Chief of Peer and Allied Health Professions for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, and has served as the Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs for the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) of the United States Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and was the Board President of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Myrick is a Co-Editor of the Journal of Psychiatric Services “Lived Experience and Leadership” column and has authored numerous peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters. Ms Myrick was a participant of the GAP (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry) crisis systems reform work and contributor to GAP Roadmap to the Ideal Crisis System report.

Ms. Myrick is a Certified Personal Medicine Coach (CPMC), has a MS in organizational psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology of Alliant International University and an MBA from Case Western University’s Weatherhead School of Management.



Lan Nguyen
Division Manager
Crisis and Suicide Services
County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services
Department

Lan has been working at County of Santa Clara since 2000. As Division Manager of the County's Behavioral Health Services Department, he oversees Crisis and Suicide Services including 988 Crisis and Suicide Prevention Lifeline. He developed and implemented a Countywide 988 Implementation Plan that facilitates strategic collaborations with local mental health mobile response services, crisis stabilization units, mental health and substance use service providers, ethnic minority communities, and law enforcement partners.

Prior to joining the County, Lan worked as mental health clinician and administrator at various community-based organizations. He continuously advocates for needed mental health services for diverse communities and families in Santa Clara County. He also served on the School Board of East Side Union High School District from 2004 to 2020.

He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and psychology from San Jose State University and a master's degree in counseling psychology from John F. Kennedy University.



Jennifer Oliphant
Hope for Tomorrow Program Director
Two Feathers Native American Family Services

Jennifer Oliphant is current the Hope for Tomorrow Program Director at Two Feathers Native American Family Services. Jennifer is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with professional interests in narrative therapy, suicide prevention, crisis response, social justice, and community organizing.



Lei Portugal Calloway
Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist
Peer Team Lead, AOT/CARE Court
Telecare Corporation

Lei Portugal Calloway has been in the Mental Health field for the past 15 years, moving up the peer career ladder from Peer Support Specialist to Peer Team Lead with Telecare's Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) and CARE Court programs in Orange County. Besides her primary duties, she directs their after-hours on-call staff, who provide crisis support 24/7 evenings, weekends and holidays. Lei has provided support at the Be Well substance use residential programs and as part of a triage team with Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) in San Diego. Lei has also provided nearly 100 assessments and crisis support for involuntary 5150 holds, as well as supporting clients with de-escalation/developing safety plans, choosing voluntary hospitalization or short-term crisis residential and avoiding incarceration.

Along with leading a team and helping to run both programs, Lei has been tasked with supporting 300+ California Telecare peers with becoming Medi-Cal Certified Peer Support Specialists and is also state certified. She recently participated as a paid Subject Matter Expert, in contributing towards the 2024 CalMHSA Certification Exam and is active with many mental health organizations and community advocacy. Personally, Lei is an alumni of Phoenix House drug and alcohol program, where she completed their 18-month program in 2007 and continues to work a program of recovery. She is the mother of two adult daughters, both of whom have had similar challenges in mental health and substance use, making Lei an effective advocate as a Family Peer Support professional.

Prior to her work in Mental Health, Lei had 28 years of experience in Marketing and Corporate Communications in aerospace, software, home design, real estate, the printing industry and health care.



Peggy Rajski
Founder and Interim CEO
The Trevor Project

Peggy Rajski (she/her) is an Oscar-winning filmmaker and founder of the groundbreaking nonprofit The Trevor Project. Rajski won the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short for directing the short film Trevor (1994), a poignant comedy about a young teen whose world is turned upside down when word spreads at school that he might be gay, and it led to the creation of The Trevor Project.

Over the course of her career, Rajski has produced multiple award-winning feature films, served as the Dean of LMU's top-ranked School of Film and Television, was the inaugural head of producing for NYU's Graduate Film program, and has conducted workshops and master classes in the U.S. and abroad.

In November 2022, she stepped into the role of Interim CEO at The Trevor Project to help steward the now 500+ person organization's transition to its next chapter. Her goal from founding day to today is ensuring Trevor thrives as a vital industry-leading lifesaving resource for LGBTQ young people, helping them see a brighter future for themselves.



Miguel Serricchio
Executive Vice President
LSQ Funding Group

Miguel lost his youngest son, Alex, to suicide just over seven years ago and shortly after found Didi Hirsch. He took advantage of the different programs that Didi Hirsch has to support families with the loss of a loved one by suicide.

Shortly after using Didi Hirsch's services, he felt the need to give back. He didn't want the loss of his son to be just a statistic, so he started volunteering. For the past six years, he has had the opportunity to facilitate eight-week groups and monthly drop-ins in English and Spanish, helping loss survivors in their grief journey. Additionally, he has written articles for Didi Hirsch's newsletter, has been interviewed and served on different suicide prevention panels. His goal is suicide-prevention.

Miguel is also the Chief Development Officer to Bezyl.com, a digital mental health app with a mission to "help people help people."

Miguel is also a member of California's Behavioral Health Task Force, and the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Network.

Originally from Buenos Aires, Miguel now resides with his wife, in Valencia, California. He holds a degree in international finance from the Universidad Argentina de la Empresa in Buenos Aires, Argentina and is a 35+ year veteran of the banking and finance industry. When not working or volunteering, Miguel enjoys cycling, hiking and traveling with his wife and spends as much time as possible backpacking with his oldest son and spending time with his daughter, daughter-in-law and granddaughter.



Shari Sinwelski
Vice President of Crisis Care
Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services

Shari Sinwelski is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in the State of California, and has nearly 30 years of experience in mental health, rape crisis, domestic violence, crisis intervention, suicide prevention and contact center management. As Vice President of Crisis Care at the Suicide Prevention Center at Didi Hirsch, she oversees all suicide prevention programs, including the implementation of 988. Shari has also served as the Deputy Director of the National Suicide Prevention Hotline leading the organization on the preparation for the national implementation of 988. She has directed several hotlines that are part of the Lifeline including: the Suicide Prevention Center in Los Angeles, Vialink in New Orleans and 211 Big Bend in Tallahassee.

Inspired by her own lived experience supporting her partner who struggled with suicide, Shari co-created the Didi Hirsch Survivors of Suicide Attempts Support group curriculum for individuals who have survived a suicide attempt and worked with many suicide attempt survivors when she facilitated the group from its inception. She later co-authored the Didi Hirsch manual and training to bring this support group to individuals nationally and around the world. The focus of the curriculum is based on seeing strength and resiliency in participants and helping them to discover that within themselves. Shari also served on the National Action Alliance Suicide Attempt Survivors task force, helping to write seminal document, The Way Forward.

Shari has trained thousands of individuals in crisis intervention, suicide prevention and contact center management. She has provided subject matter expertise and mental health support on programming on national publications, major television networks and Broadway productions. She holds a BS in Psychology and Master's and Educational Specialist degrees in Mental Health Counseling from Florida State University.



Robert Smith
Chairman
Pala Band of Mission Indians

Robert H. Smith serves as Chairman of the Pala Band of Mission Indians, a position he has held since 1990. For more than three decades, Robert Smith has dedicated himself to improving the way of life for the members of the Pala Band of Mission Indians.

As Tribal Chair, he played an integral role in the complex negotiations that resulted in Governor Wilson's signing of the Pala-State Compact in 1996, a groundbreaking agreement that legalized gaming on Indian lands in California. In 1999, Chairman Smith played an instrumental role in securing Tribal agreement on the Model Compacts, which help to ensure the continued economic freedom and independence of Tribes throughout the state. In 2004, Chairman Smith was one of five Tribal leaders to work side-by-side with Governor Schwarzenegger to come to an agreement on a set of compacts that benefited both the Tribes and the state of California.

Chairman Smith takes great pride in being actively involved in the community and lends his time and energy to a variety of organizations. He serves as a member of California Tribal Business Alliance, San Luis Rey Indian Water Authority, Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association, San Diego Association of Governments, Indian Health Council for North San Diego County, National Fire Protection Agency, Pala Housing Authority, Vivian Banks Charter School Parent Advisory Board, Cupa Cultural Center, California Indian Manpower Consortium, California Fee-to-Trust Consortium, and the Inter-Tribal Long Term Recovery Foundation. Chairman Smith also serves as a delegate to the Tribal-Interior Budget Council for the Pacific Region, CalFire Advisory Board, National Congress of American Indians, and the National Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Board.

Chairman Smith has been a leader and essential contributor in the progression of Pala, including being an advocate for proactively addressing

mental health concerns, supporting suicide interventions, and understanding the role and availability of 988 for the Tribal community. He also understands the need for Tribal people to have access to culturally competent 988 crisis support. Chairman Smith fully supports the Tuchily Mobile Crisis Response Team, which is centered at the Pala Reservation, and is in collaboration with the Indian Health Clinic.



Christine Stoner-Mertz
Chief Executive Officer
CA Alliance of Child and Family Services

Christine Stoner-Mertz, LCSW, is the CEO of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services and its Catalyst Center. The Alliance is a 160+ member association that serves as the collective voice for organizations that serve children, youth and families throughout California. As a practitioner, administrator, advocate and former foster parent, Ms. Stoner-Mertz brings her personal and professional expertise to the policy and practice efforts of the Alliance and Catalyst, a training and technical assistance program focused on practice improvement in children and family services. Representing member organizations providing behavioral health, child welfare and education services, she helps to ensure that policy reflects the needs of provider organizations and those they serve.

Previously, Ms. Stoner-Mertz served as President and CEO of Lincoln Families, an agency delivering a range of community-based services in the San Francisco Bay area. She has served on state and national boards of behavioral health associations, and has worked as a consultant to numerous nonprofits, county departments and the State of California.

Ms. Stoner-Mertz was a co-founder of Seneca Family of Agencies, a state-wide nonprofit. A sought-after expert on MediCal EPSDT program design and implementation, she has expertise in integrating funding streams to effectively address the behavioral health needs of children, youth and families. She has served on the boards of directors of the California Alliance, the California Council of Behavioral Health Agencies, the National Council of Behavioral Health Organizations, and has been the recipient of numerous service and leadership awards during her career, including the Jefferson Award for Public Service.



Doug Subers
Director of Governmental Affairs
California Professional Firefighters

Doug Subers is currently the Director of Governmental Affairs at the California Professional Firefighters which represents 35,000 professional firefighters and emergency medical service personnel across the state. CPF advocates on policies that impact their members wages, hours, and working conditions. CPF was honored to co-sponsor AB 1544 (Gipson/2020) which established community paramedicine and triage to alternate destination programs, including specialties in alternate destination mental health crisis facility and alternate destination sobering center. CPF's goal is to ensure that the communities they serve have access to systems that deliver high quality care that meets the needs of community members.



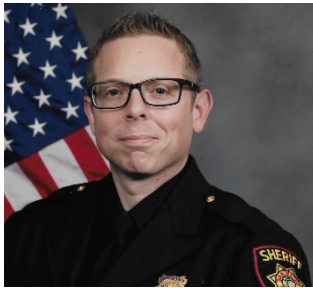
Sohil Sud, MD, MA

**Director, Children & Youth Behavioral Health Initiative
California Health & Human Services**

Dr. Sohil Sud is director of the Children & Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, California's multiyear multibillion investment to transform the way we support children, youth, and families. Prior to this role, he served as Assistant Deputy Director in the Center for Healthy Communities of the California Department of Public Health. He also led Safe Schools for All, the state's interagency team to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in TK-12 schools.

Dr. Sud is a practicing hospital-based pediatrician on faculty at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). He cares for newborns and hospitalized children in a number of Bay Area hospitals. He received his clinical training at UCSF in the Pediatric Leadership for the Underserved (PLUS) program and served as Chief Resident at San Francisco General Hospital. He earned his medical degree with research honors from Tufts University. Dr. Sud holds a master's degree in international affairs from Tufts Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and a bachelor's degree from Brown University.

Dr. Sud has published peer-reviewed manuscripts and received additional training in clinical research at UCSF and humanitarian affairs at Harvard University. He has served on the advisory boards of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter 1, and Adolescent Health Champions, and was also a Senior Fellow at the Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health.



Michael Tabak
Lieutenant
San Mateo County Sheriff's Office

Mike Tabak has worked in law enforcement since 2007, having experience in Corrections, Patrol, Crisis Training, Crisis Response, and Peer Support.

Some of his proudest professional achievements, thus far, have been his involvement in the San Mateo County Sheriff's Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT), and the Crisis Negotiation Unit (CNU). Mike has been involved with San Mateo County's CIT program since 2015, during which time, he coordinated the program for two years. He was also directly involved in the formation, implementation, and expansion of our county's first co-response model, PERT. As the PERT Detective, he provided crisis response and follow-up services with a licensed clinician within the County of San Mateo. From Mike's work in PERT, he was honored to receive the 2019 Tony Hoffman Award which, "Recognizes individuals...who have made an extraordinary difference in the lives of people with mental illness and the San Mateo County community."

Mike has seen firsthand, the importance of an informed and compassionate response whenever feasible, and the positive effect such a response can have on individuals and their families. His experience collaborating with behavioral health professionals has been invaluable in his ability to curtail an appropriate crisis response and to help other first responders do the same.

Additionally, Mike's family has been personally touched by crisis. This subject is real to him, both personally and professionally, and his dedication to it is unwavering.



Stephanie Welch
Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health
California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS)

Stephanie N. Welch was appointed Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health at the California Health & Human Services Agency in 2020.

Welch previously served as Executive Officer for the Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health since 2015. Welch was the Senior Program Manager for the California Mental Health Services Authority from 2011 to 2015, an Associate Policy Director at the County Behavioral Health Directors Association from 2007 to 2011, and the Associate Director of Public Policy at the Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies from 2000 to 2005. Welch earned a BA in Social Work from University of California at Davis and a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California.

California Health and Human Services Agency

PROJECT TEAM BIOS



Anh Thu Bui (she/her)
Project Director, 988-Crisis Care Continuum
California Health and Human Services Agency

Dr. Bui has worked as a community psychiatrist in California for over twenty years, serving individuals of all ages in several county specialty mental health programs and community health centers. She earned her Medical Degree from the Mayo Clinic School of Medicine in 1995 and holds board certifications in Psychiatry, Community and Public Psychiatry, and Addiction Medicine. She is a proud alumna of the California Health Care Foundation Health Care Leadership Program, Cohort 19.

Much of her work in advocating for individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders has been informed by experiencing and witnessing trauma in her family and community as a refugee from Vietnam, and 35 years later, seeing the positive expansion of essential health services via the Affordable Care Act. She worked at the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for the last two years as a Medical Consultant in Behavioral Health, including serving as Project Director for the SAMHSA 988 Cooperative Agreement to DHCS to support implementation of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

She is honored to have recently joined the California Health and Human Services Agency to work on 988 implementation and integration into the crisis care continuum to improve behavioral health services for all Californians.



Ali Vangrow (she/her)
Senior Program Analyst
Office of Policy and Strategic Planning
California Health and Human Services Agency

Ali Vangrow brings over six years of health policy experience. She joined CalHHS in August of 2023 after graduating from University of California, Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy (GSPP) where she received a Master of Public Policy degree. During her time at GSPP, Ali specialized in health policy, focusing particularly on behavioral health and the well-being of early childhood populations. Throughout her graduate studies, she collaborated with a range of organizations, including First 5 California and the Kennedy Forum.

Prior to her graduate studies, Ali gained extensive federal experience by working in the United States Senate and House of Representatives in Washington D.C. for about five years. Her main focus was health policy, but she also worked on other topics such as agriculture, veterans' affairs, LGBTQ rights, among others.

Ali earned her Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Colgate University, where she discovered her passion for policymaking and public service.

Health Management Associates

PROJECT TEAM BIOS



Betsy Jones
Managing Principal
Health Management Associates (HMA)

Betsy Jones brings 25 years of experience working collaboratively with health and human services partners to transform publicly funded systems of care and advance cross-sector initiatives. Her experience spans community health, community-based nonprofits, managed care, and government. She has guided policy priorities through government and legislative processes and has facilitated cross-sector partnerships with leaders within state and local government, health plans, physical and behavioral health care delivery systems, and community agencies to ensure the success of high-profile, multi-sector initiatives.

As the managing principal of HMA's Seattle office, Betsy provides leadership and strategic focus to client engagements. Her areas of expertise include health and human services policy, strategic planning, systems design, health care integration, collaboration and facilitation, and project leadership. Notable client projects include Health Homes implementation for a large managed care plan in California; creation of a behavioral health IPA to support managed care integration across five managed care organizations in King County, WA; the facilitation of a statewide process to support 988 implementation and transform Washington's crisis system; and facilitation of a statewide task force and pilot focusing on complex discharge populations.

Prior to HMA, Ms. Jones served as the health and human potential policy advisor to the King County executive for five years. In this role, she spearheaded the success of integrated policy initiatives to advance King County's strategic plan and improve the health and well-being of King County residents.

Betsy also worked as the director of product development at the not-for-profit Community Health Plan of Washington and was responsible for program development, innovation, and behavioral health integration. In this

capacity, she oversaw the design and implementation of a state-wide, evidence-based, innovative healthcare program that integrated primary care, mental health, and substance use services for high-risk members.

Betsy earned a Master of Social Work from the University of Washington and a Master of Business Administration from the Thunderbird School of Global Management. She received a bachelor's degree in Spanish and economics from Albion College.



Nicholas Williams
Associate Principal
Health Management Associates (HMA)

Nicholas Williams is a social sector analyst, writer, and consultant with extensive experience and proven results in academic, business, nonprofit and government settings. A skilled communicator and collaborator, he has led projects related to community based mental health, mobile crisis response, child and family welfare, homelessness and affordable housing, early education, K-12 education, and workforce development. Based in Los Angeles, his projects have included stakeholder driven strategic planning engagements with community based behavioral health providers, management and organization of statewide plans and approaches to behavioral health related transformation, and evaluation and assessments of programs and initiatives related to behavioral health and other social determinants.

He joins HMA after serving as associate director of the University of Southern California (USC) Center of Philanthropy and Public Policy. While there, he developed practice-oriented programs and research reports, engaging scholars and foundation leaders on issues at the intersection of philanthropy, government, and the private sector. Nicholas has worked in-house for a management consulting agency and maintained his own consulting practice focused on strategic planning, program, and resource development for nonprofit and social impact organizations for more than a decade.

He has published numerous research reports on philanthropy and public policy, including reports on state local and federal offices of strategic partnerships, housing, homelessness, and voting rights.

Nicholas earned a Master of Public Policy from USC, and bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Denver.



Betsy Uhrman
Associate Principal
Health Management Associates (HMA)

A skilled strategist and facilitator, Betsy Uhrman has a keen ability to help social sector organizations prepare for a changing future.

Betsy joins HMA from NPO Solutions, now a division of HMA Community Strategies, where she worked extensively with nonprofit and public sector organizations on all aspects of organizational planning and development. Her work has spanned a wide range of issue areas such as public education, youth development, homeless services, public and behavioral health, visual and performing arts, and economic justice.

She has facilitated numerous strategic planning processes, helping organizations set priorities and focus resources according to community needs, considering stakeholder input and changing internal and external conditions. Betsy also has significant experience working with multi-stakeholder collaboratives to move through a process of shared inquiry, problem-solving, and decision making.

Before working with NPO Solutions, Betsy worked at the Open Society Foundations and Tides Foundation where she conducted field research and implemented grantmaking programs in areas such as youth development, media, disability rights, and economic justice. In these capacities, she had many opportunities to consider how to cultivate partnerships and to effectively support large-scale programs and projects.

Betsy earned a Master of Public Administration from the University of Southern California, and an undergraduate degree from the University of California, Los Angeles.