



Alameda County Mental Health Services Act

**SPOTLIGHT ON:**

# Work Supports Wellness

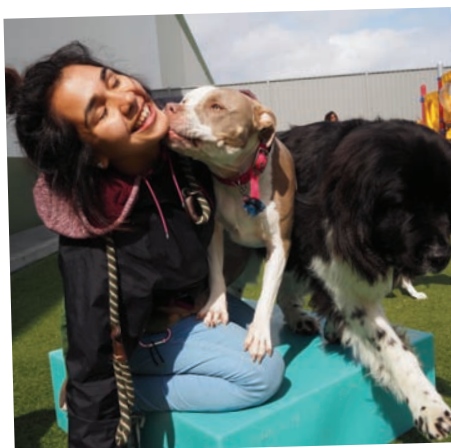
Spring/Summer 2016



Doing her internship to become a psychiatric nurse.



Peer counselors in conversation at a meeting.



Oakland dog care employs people living with mental health challenges.



At Bright Young Minds, youth learn about mental health careers.



Teen in La Clínica/FACES Behavioral Health Pathways Academy.

## What is the Mental Health Services Act?

More than two million Californians are affected by potentially disabling mental illnesses every year. About 30 years ago, California cut services in state mental hospitals, without providing adequate funding for mental health services in the community.

To address this, in 2004 voters approved the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), also known as Proposition 63. It places a 1% tax on personal income above \$1 million. The MHSA emphasizes transformation of the mental health system while improving the quality of life for people living with a mental illness.

## Employment Supports Wellness

Having a job is an important source of dignity and purpose for many people. For consumers, individuals with mental health and substance use conditions, having and maintaining a job supports their wellness and recovery. The Mental Health Services Act provides funding for employment resources.

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS) has a variety of employment initiatives. Those who aspire to work can access employment resources that provide needed supports in order to seek, obtain, and maintain employment. Obstacles to gaining and keeping a job include the fear of shame and discrimination at the job site, lack of housing and diminished self-confidence. To address these challenges, BHCS staff partner with consumers and offer individually tailored services.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Building the Behavioral Health Workforce.....	3
Mentoring the Next Generation .....	3
Wellness & Work Go Hand in Hand.....	4
Peers: Transforming Hurt to Help .....	5
Family Partners: Helping Families in Need.....	6
Employer Spotlight.....	7
Employment & Education Resources .....	7
Crisis & Support Hotlines.....	8

## From the Director's Desk



Photo by Tue Nam Ton.

I am privileged to serve Alameda County as the Director of Behavioral Health Care Services. For our county residents living with a mental health challenge, finding the ingredients that result in wellness is important. As for many of us, working at something that is meaningful to you can bring you a sense of purpose that will anchor you.

Our Individual Placement and Support employment specialists provide employment services to our county's residents living with mental illness, helping them to obtain and keep jobs. Employment supports vary based upon each worker's preferences and needs.

Our Workforce Development staff is dedicated to increasing the number of people trained to be mental health professionals. They are working to make sure the next wave of mental health professionals reflect our county's diverse ethnic populations and are fluent in some of the 50 plus languages spoken by our county residents.

Our Pool of Consumer Champions hires people in recovery from mental health challenges so that they can work as peer counselors assisting those with similar challenges.

I anticipate further growth in the ways our staff provides employment supports. I am proud to work alongside such committed and dedicated service delivery team members.

**Manuel J. Jiménez, Jr., MA, MFT**

Director of Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services

Visit [www.acmhsa.org](http://www.acmhsa.org) for more information.

Cover photos: top left, top right, and lower right photos by Tue Nam Ton. Lower left photo by Paul Takayanagi. Center photo by Every Dog Has Its Day Care. Editor, Sally Douglas Arce. Designer, Nadja Lazansky.

# Building the Behavioral Health Workforce

Workforce Education & Training (WET) helps Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS) develop programs to build and expand the public behavioral health workforce. WET also addresses the need to increase cultural diversity and linguistic capacity in the county's system to better reflect the population of the communities served. Projects are funded by the Mental Health Services Act. **Sanjida Mazid**, WET Manager with BHCS, tells us more:

**Q: Why is it important to introduce high school students to mental health careers?**

**Ms. Mazid:** Career building is a process and starts at an early age. So, we need to reach students while they are figuring out their career and education goals. We are planting the seeds to inspire students to stay in school, pursue a career in mental health, and ultimately serve people in their own communities.

**Q: How are you reaching out to students in public high schools?**

**Ms. Mazid:** "High School Career Pathways" is an initiative that has really blossomed. We partner with community organizations to reach African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian and Pacific Islander students about careers in



mental health and substance use. We also support their education and career goals through work-based learning.

**Q: What are examples of some programs?**

**Ms. Mazid:** La Clínica de La Raza has a FACES Behavioral Health Pathways Academy at Life Academy High School. Internships at mental health organizations are included.

BHCS recently hosted a series of "Bright Young Minds Conferences" to introduce youth to behavioral health careers. Over 350 students from diverse populations were able to meet and be mentored by mental health professionals. The students also broke down stigma surrounding mental health and learned about their own physical and mental wellness.

**For information, contact:**  
**Sanjida Mazid, Workforce Education and Training Manager**  
**(510) 567-8071**  
**SMazid@acbhcs.org**

Sandija Mazid, left; Tomás Magaña, right. This photo and the photo of Jordan Clark by Paul Takayanagi. Photo of Fernanda Maya by Tue Nam Ton.

# Mentoring the Next Generation

**TOMÁS MAGAÑA, MD, MA**  
**Founder & Director, FACES for the Future Coalition**

*"We encourage youth to enter mental health and health careers. Low income and minority teens understand the experience of what it means to be 'other.' This enables them to empathize with the people they serve."*

**It is important to expose linguistically and ethnically diverse high school students to mental health careers. Students learn about a wide range of options from certificate programs to college doctorate degrees.**



**JORDAN CLARK**  
**High School Senior, Bright Young Minds participant**

*"At Bright Young Minds, I learned the difference between brain intelligence and heart intelligence. You have to bring caring to what you do. I want to be a psychology major and possibly be a therapist or psychologist."*



**FERNANDA MAYA**  
**Teen in La Clínica/FACES Behavioral Health Pathways Academy**

*"It was good doing internships. Staff treat people with a mental illness with dignity and respect. We should never judge people for what they do. They may struggle with things we don't know about."*

# Wellness and Work Go Hand in Hand

Individuals with mental health challenges often struggle with poverty and unemployment. Although many people want to work, they might need some extra help to get there. The Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Vocational Program staff successfully help people find and maintain regular jobs in their communities. Individuals don't need to have recent work experience.

"Overall in California, we do a terrible job of effectively helping people with mental health challenges find and keep employment," says Rick DeGette, MFT, Alameda County BHCS Vocational Services Director.

This is why there is a 92 percent unemployment rate for people in

the public mental health system. "I'm convinced that employment services are better offered as part of health care services," DeGette says.

Vocational staff assist people with mental illness or substance use challenges identify what they already do well and identify their interests and goals. Employment specialists work with each person to make the best job match to meet that person's goals.

According to DeGette, each person's employment story speaks to their heart, determination, drive and spirit to rise above difficult conditions. Being employed is a way to claim your place as a worker in the community. These are competitive jobs—a job that

***"You don't have to have recent work experience. The staff will work with you to make the best job match to meet your goals." —Rick DeGette***

people can apply for whether or not they have a disability.

How long it takes to help an individual reach their goals varies. Staff partner with each person on their employment journey. They offer hope when they are discouraged, assist in completing applications and interviews, and in keeping jobs once they get them. Services are tailored to meet the needs of each person.

Jesus Herrera, who is in his 50s, has been working at a retail job for

almost three years. "My employment specialist is there for me 110 percent," Herrera says. "Other programs were good but they were not geared to preparation for society. I am now able to adapt to the world as it is."

**For information, contact:**  
**Rick DeGette, MFT,**  
**Vocational Services Director**  
**510-777-4242 or**  
**RDeGette@acbhcs.org**  
**[www.acbhcs.org/vocational](http://www.acbhcs.org/vocational)**

## Vocational program success stories:



Photo by Martin Pacheco.

### JESUS HERRERA

***"I feel productive and useful when I am working."***

When I work, I make friends and have structure for the day.

I am a contributing member of society by working.



Photo by Jackie Pogue.

### PHAT KIM

***"After my shift is done, I feel happy and proud of myself"***

Working in childcare helps me have a focus, be active and make friends.

I am going to college to become a teacher.

# Peers: Transforming Hurt to Help

Consumers, individuals with mental health and substance use conditions, work as peer counselors in Alameda County. They are an essential resource for recovery and work with clients to help them develop new meaning and purpose for their lives. The journey of mental health recovery is a deeply personal and unique process. Peer counselors share how they improve their health and wellness and support others to live a self-directed life.

## How did you get started in this work?

### NICK HECHT

Intern at BestNow

*"I have been greatly helped by the mental health system. I wanted to be a part of that system. I feel empowered knowing I help others."*



## What keeps you going?

### SHAWN DAVIS

Programs and Outreach Assistant at Youth in Mind

*"Having so many positive influences in what I do. My goal is to help someone else who does not think they have a voice. It keeps me grounded."*



## What inspired you to do this work?

### MARY HOGDEN

Manager at Pool of Consumer Champions

*"I am in recovery from my mental health challenges and like helping others find their way to wellness. I enjoy giving back what was given to me."*



### ANH TA

Regional Practice Coordinator at Trauma Transformed

*"My personal experiences with mental health and substance use. I want to understand human suffering, how to journey with people and honor that process."*



For information, contact:  
Khatera Aslami-Tamplen, Consumer Empowerment Manager  
510-567-8102 or [KAslami@acbhcs.org](mailto:KAslami@acbhcs.org)

Photos by Tue Nam Ton.

# FAMILY PARTNERS

Training family members to help the next wave of families in need

Family Partners are parents or caregivers who provide support to families with children ages birth through 21, who receive services in the Alameda County Behavioral Health-care System. Family Partners have raised children with behavioral or emotional challenges and have extensive peer training. They bring personal experience and training to families as peers who have “been there and can help.”

*“Self-care is taking time to do something relaxing before I plunge into facing difficult problems.”*

**DANIEL VÁSQUEZ**  
Mental Health Family Partner, UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland



Family partners, Daniel Vásquez (left) and Allison Massey (right) with Rosa Warder, Manager, Office of Family Empowerment (center). Photo by Tue Nam Ton.

*“I empower families lost in the challenges they face raising a child with mental health concerns.”*

**ALLISON MASSEY**  
Program Director, Family Partnership Program, Alameda County BHCS

## What do you find rewarding about your job?

Their facial expression when they meet someone who has had similar experiences and found solutions. For the dads especially, I’m a professional and face the same things. I share with them how it’s OK to ask questions.

Some school staff and clinicians acknowledge that they never thought about the family’s perspective. I provide “Ah-ha” moments for professionals, as well as for family members.

## How does helping other families give you new perspectives on your own family situation?

I ask the Dads and Moms, “What are you doing for self-care?” It’s a reminder to me, to make sure that I don’t burn myself out. It does not have to cost anything. It could be a walk outdoors or listening to a favorite song before a stressful situation.

## What do you find rewarding about your job?

Empowering parents and caregivers; giving them hope. Families can feel stuck or lost in the challenges they face raising a child with behavioral and mental health concerns. There are challenges with their child at home, with the special education system and with finding and working with behavioral health providers. I talk about the frustrations I have dealt with and overcome, encouraging them. Their outlook changes as they feel supported.

## How does helping other families give you new perspectives on your own family situation?

I see myself in so many of the families I work with. As I help them, I think about how I can handle things differently in my own family. There isn’t just one way of doing things. I see the progress I make and that the families I help make.

**For information, contact:**  
Rosa Warder, MS, MFA, Manager, Office of Family Empowerment  
510-567-8037 or [RWarder@acbhcs.org](mailto:RWarder@acbhcs.org)

# Employer Spotlight

## *Dog Day Care Shines in Hiring Practices*

Lauren Westreich, the owner of **Every Dog Has Its Day Care** in Oakland, takes pride in her business and cares for each dog like a family member. She is also committed to having a diverse workforce from the local community. "We like hiring people who have had stumbling blocks finding and keeping employment they like," Westreich says. They usually hire dog handlers. New hires attend a 3-week training where they learn how to communicate with dogs through body language. "Dogs care about what's happening today.



Lauren Westreich and friend. Photo by Every Dog Has Its Day Care.

They are not interested in your past," she adds. Dog handlers interact with the dogs and keep the facility clean with a set list of tasks each day. "Our devotion to our dogs and their safety is the core of our business. In hiring, we take away the labels and stigma and focus on each person's skills and commitment to the job. What matters is dedication to working with the dogs," Westreich says.

Job openings are posted online, on job boards and with mental health nonprofits.

<http://everydog.com/jobs>

## Employment Resources

### America's Job Center

America's Job Center of California, with 10 centers in Alameda County, is open to everyone in the community. When you register, you can use their computers, browse their job boards, go to workshops and events, and meet with their staff.

[www.americasjobcenter.ca.gov](http://www.americasjobcenter.ca.gov)

### California Department of Rehabilitation

The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) is an employment and independent living resource for people with disabilities. DOR has offices in Berkeley, Oakland and Fremont. DOR can provide resources to help mental health consumers find, get, and keep meaningful community employment.

[www.dor.ca.gov](http://www.dor.ca.gov)

### The Center for Accessible Technology (CforAT)

CforAT is located at the Ashby BART station in Berkeley and is open to anyone with a disability. Since most jobs now require computer use, staff work with Department of Rehabilitation clients and others with disabilities to provide computer access. This makes job applicants better prepared for employment.

510-841-3224, [info@cforat.org](mailto:info@cforat.org), <http://cforat.org>

## Education Resources

### The Collaborative

#### Greater Bay Area Mental Health & Workforce Collaborative

The Collaborative represents many counties and organizations, all committed to expanding the Bay Area's public mental health workforce.

[www.mentalhealthworkforce.org](http://www.mentalhealthworkforce.org)

### The Occupational Information Network

#### O\*Net Online

The O\*NET program is a free online resource that has occupational information to help students and job seekers find careers or change careers. O\*Net describes the skills and knowledge required to perform the work. It gives information about the licensing and experience needed for each job. O\*Net gives salary details and other information.

[www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)

### California Association for Alcohol/Drug Educators

CAADE's website gives information about colleges that have Alcohol and Drug Studies programs. Learn about how to become a certified addiction counselor.

707-722-2331, [office@caade.org](mailto:office@caade.org), <http://caade.org>

## Resources for Employers

Employers in Alameda County have found benefits in hiring people living with a mental health condition. They have found them to be eager to learn, punctual and some of their most loyal workers.

Hiring managers are encouraged to consider these employees.

**For information, contact:**  
**Jackie Pogue, Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services**  
 510-777-4245  
[jpogue@acbhcs.org](mailto:jpogue@acbhcs.org)

# Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS)

Call **911** in case of a life  
threatening emergency

Such as...

- In immediate physical danger or harm
- In the process of a suicide attempt

## CRISIS & URGENT CARE

### MULTILINGUAL HOTLINE 24 HOURS A DAY—7 DAYS A WEEK

For mental health or  
substance use help, call ACCESS  
**1-800-491-9099**

ACCESS is a multilingual, culturally responsive call center that provides information, screening and referrals for mental health and substance use disorder treatment for Alameda County residents.

#### CRISIS SUPPORT, INFORMATION & REFERRAL—MONDAY TO FRIDAY

Para español, llame al:  
**510-535-6200**—Oakland  
**510-300-3180**—Hayward

中文電話線: **510-869-7200**  
Bằng tiếng Việt, xin gọi:  
**510-869-7200**

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### WELLNESS CENTERS

Welcoming and accessible drop-in services offering classes and programs, skills-building, and behavioral health services for people with a known or suspected mental illness. No appointment is necessary.

Alameda, Four Bridges  
**510-827-2097**

Oakland, Towne House  
**510-658-9480**

Fremont, South County  
**510-657-7425**

Pleasanton, Valley  
Wellness Center  
**925-484-8457**

Hayward, Hedco House  
**510-247-8235**

### SUICIDE PREVENTION

For people having suicidal thoughts and feelings or who have a specific plan to end their life.

**24-hour crisis line: 1-800-309-2131**

Or

**Text “safe” to 20121 4-11pm, 7 days a week**

### PARENT SUPPORT HOTLINE

Hotline for parents and caregivers of children 0-21 years of age. Call anonymously for support, resources and positive parenting tips. English and Spanish spoken. Multilingual translation. Multiple phone sessions available.

**24-hours a day  
7 days a week  
1-800-829-3777**

### CRISIS INTERVENTION AND BRIEF TREATMENT

BHCS Crisis Response Program

**M–F, 8:30am–5pm**

**North County**

(Alameda, Oakland and Emeryville)

**510-383-5020**

**South County**

(All county areas not included above)

**510-891-5600**

### WALK-IN URGENT HELP Sausal Creek Outpatient Clinic

**2620 26th Ave., Oakland**  
A crisis walk-in service for adults  
18 and older.

**510-437-2363**

**M-F, 8am–8pm**

**Sat. & holidays 8am–4:30pm**

Only Berkeley & Albany  
residents

### MOBILE CRISIS TEAM

**510-981-5254**

**11:30am–10pm, 7 days  
a week, including holidays**

### BERKELEY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Day-to-day skills and support  
for individuals with serious  
mental illnesses.

**510-981-5290**

(18 & older)

**510-981-5280**

(youth & family)

BHCS services are primarily for people with MediCal or no health insurance. This list includes services provided by BHCS and other organizations. Not all the services listed here receive MHS funds.



[www.acbhcs.org](http://www.acbhcs.org)