

# UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

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## Enriching Your Personal NACBHDD Experience

### Issue: Your NACBHDD Experience

Nearly every edition of *Under the Microscope* challenges you, our NACBHDD members, to do two things: to gain a detailed understanding of a critical issue in our field, and to take action in the form of involvement and advocacy to advance a much-needed solution.

This edition of UTM follows a similar format, but sets out several more personal challenges:

- How can you enrich your personal experience as a NACBHDD member?
- How can you advance your skills and career in developing, administering, and delivering services at the county level?
- What can you gain, and what can you contribute, by working more closely and sharing the expertise of your NACBHDD colleagues?

So that you can better consider these challenges, let's take a look at what NACBHDD does and what roles that members like you can play in the organization.

### Analysis: NACBHDD's Mission, Leadership, Programs and Committees

NACBHDD is a national membership association that represents the directors of county-based behavioral health and developmental disabilities programs to the U.S. Congress, to agencies and regulators in the federal government, and to organizations in the national and state not-for-profit community.

Since its founding, NACBHDD has been a formal affiliate organization of the National Association of Counties (NACo), which represents the needs of the nation's 3,069 counties to the Congress, the federal government, and regulators. Through this affiliation, NACBHDD members have gained the opportunity to share their knowledge about national behavioral health and developmental disability issues through NACo's system of subject-focused committees. In recent years, the knowledge offered by NACBHDD members has prompted the addition of a series of resolutions to NACo's annual legislative agenda, including five in 2016, that continue to prompt needed changes and reforms to benefit those who administer, deliver, and utilize behavioral health and ID/DD services.

As of 2014, another organization representing the mental health needs of rural America—the National Association for Rural Mental Health, or NARMH, became part of NACBHDD and its members also are full members of NACBHDD. The addition of NARMH has increased the focus of NACBHDD issues of health insurance availability, competition, cost, and coverage, as well as on the accessibility and adequacy of behavioral health and ID/DD service delivery toward the many small and rural counties of the United States.

### *NACBHDD Leadership, Staff, and Committees*

NACBHDD's leadership consists of a board of directors, full-time staff, and a series of committees.

**NACBHDD Board.** The NACBHDD board is responsible for developing and managing the organization's strategic planning process. In recent years, NACBHDD, through its strategic planning process, the efforts of NACBHDD committees, and the passion of individual NACBHDD members, has exercised a growing influence upon the direction of national policy in a variety of areas:

- Advocacy for behavioral health workforce development, including support for mentoring programs, grants, and other opportunities that promote specialization and new career paths in behavioral health and ID/DD.
- Stronger enforcement of parity-level insurance coverage for mental health and substance-use disorder treatment, per the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. This work combines everything from Congressional testimony and evidence-gathering about parity concerns and violations to state-level advocacy with insurance commissioners.
- Practical, just, and cost-efficient coordination between behavioral health, criminal justice, and public safety resources to promote better population health and prevent or minimize the involvement of people with behavioral health problems in the criminal justice system. NACBHDD's support is ongoing through a series of national initiatives:
  - The development of community/crisis services in NACBHDD's Decarceration Initiative;
  - Coordination of behavioral health resources in the sequential intercept and diversion strategies promoted by NACo's Stepping Up Initiative;
  - Population health programs that are part of NACo's Healthy Counties Initiative;
  - Close coordination and support for the concerns and interests of the members of the NACo-County Sheriff's Justice Committee.
- Advocacy, training, and practical efforts that demonstrate how greater integration of mental health, SUD treatment, and primary care services, together with social supports, housing, and access to employment, can help individuals achieve and maintain long-term recovery and health supported by strong links to their local communities.
- Promoting greater understanding and appreciation of the vital "safety net" responsibilities and services that are administered by counties for those who suffer from mental health or substance use disorders, as well as ID/DD. In conjunction with this effort, NACBHDD actively promotes the need for:
  - Ongoing Medicaid Expansion.
  - Greater federal, state and local funding for behavioral health and ID/DD services.
  - Close interaction with CMS to promote continued innovation and maximum use of regulatory mechanisms, including HCBS, 1115, and 1915 waiver programs, that give states and counties the flexibility and resources to shape needed programs and services.
  - Analysis and information-sharing about how NACBHDD members can shape and manage service delivery in the face of new market trends and challenges.

The four current officers on NACBHDD's board are:

- President: Cherryl Ramirez, Executive Director, Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs
- Vice President: Gilbert Gonzales, Director, Mental Health Department, Bexar County, Texas
- Secretary: Jennifer Faison, Executive Director, Virginia Association of Community Services Boards
- Treasurer: Michael Deal, Executive Director, Southwest Behavioral Health Center, St. George, Utah

**NACBHDD Staff.** The small full-time staff of NACBHDD and NARMH perform a variety of roles for the organization: They facilitate the work of the board and committees. They work with a variety of individuals to coordinate the development and publication of information presented in NACBHDD webinars, news, and

publications. They also assist in developing and presenting policy information that is critical to the legislative and advocacy work of NACBHDD and NARMH on Capitol Hill. Members of the staff include:

- Ron Manderscheid, Ph.D., is Executive Director, NACBHDD and NARMH. He also actively represents the interests of county directors and service recipients on Capitol Hill as Co-Chair of the Coalition for Whole Health.
- Neche Nelson is Executive Assistant for NACBHDD and NARMH.

NACBHDD staff direct and develop daily, monthly, and annual programs to deliver information and support the work of NACBHDD members. Regular programming includes:

- Daily, instant news feeds that provide the latest behavioral health and ID/DD news and policy developments nationwide.
- Regular webinar programs, typically presented by NACBHDD members or allied organizations that provide implementation case studies from states or counties around the country; timely legislative, regulatory, or program updates; or technical assistance resources.
- *Headline DC*, a monthly summary of behavioral health and developmental disability policy, legislative, and regulatory news from Capitol Hill, federal agencies, the non-for-profit community and state governments.
- *The NACBHDD Newsletter*, a monthly newsletter updating NACBHDD news, initiatives, members, and events.
- *Under the Microscope*, a monthly, in-depth analysis of a nationally important BH or ID/DD initiative, policy, or regulation that identifies vital member concerns and suggests practical steps for advocacy and action.
- In addition to these members-only information items, the Executive Director publishes a regular blog in *Behavioral Healthcare* magazine that charts the ongoing work of NACBHDD through its interactions with issues and policy developments of concern to the behavioral health community ([www.behavioral.net](http://www.behavioral.net)).

Annual programming includes the preparation of NACBHDD's annual Legislative & Policy Conference, held during the winter in conjunction with NACo's annual conference in Washington, DC. The L & P Conference focuses on strategic issues for legislative and regulatory action in the coming year. It always features prominent speakers from the federal government, including CMS, and from our allies in the non-profit community. The conference also dedicates part of one day for direct advocacy by our members to their Congressional delegations. NACBHDD's annual conference schedule also includes three additional Board conferences—in spring, summer, and fall—at various locations nationwide.

Ongoing technical assistance is another important NACBHDD service. NACBHDD has been vocal in detailing the needs of counties for additional technical assistance from agencies (SAMHSA, HRSA, CDC, Medicaid, and others) regarding proper compliance with service provision requirements under various waivers: 1115, 1915, HCBS, and others. As noted, addressing key regulatory issues and concerns with high-level regulators is a key event at every annual L & P conference. This process continues on an ad hoc basis throughout the NACBHDD program year.

***NACBHDD Committees.*** NACBHDD operates three standing committees:

The State Association Directors' Committee meets monthly to address current issues of federal and state BH and ID/DD policy. It also plays a major role in developing the agenda for NACBHDD's annual L & P Conference. Currently, this Committee is headed by Patricia Ryan, former Executive Director of the California Behavioral Health Directors Association and now affiliated with Harbage Consulting.

The Behavioral Health Committee meets bi-monthly to review the progress and needs of states and counties who are developing and delivering service innovations under Medicaid Section 1115 Demonstration Waivers. These waivers, created by the Affordable Care Act to foster innovations, are being used by a growing number of states to evaluate significant and flexible new care programs. Among the most closely-watched of these waivers is the recent Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System Waiver, a project that is expanding SUD treatment options in California by

making federal Medicaid matching funds conditionally available to treatment facilities larger than 16 beds. Such facilities had long been banned from receiving federal Medicaid funds by the Institution for Mental Disease (IMD) rule. For 2015-2016, the Behavioral Health Committee is co-chaired by Sandra Naylor Goodwin, MSW, PhD, the Executive Director of the California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions, and Bren Manaugh, the VP for Adult Behavioral Health at the Center for Health Care Services in Bexar County, TX.

NACBHDD's Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) Committee meets monthly to develop and execute nationwide strategies for advancing community-based support options for individuals with ID/DD. It also functions as a principal advocate for the ID/DD Community around the development of state waivers for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). The committee is headed by Peter Moore, Service Initiatives Director for the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

NACBHDD currently is seeking a Chair for a fourth committee:

The NACBHDD Justice Committee meets monthly to address national, state, and county concerns involving the provision and financing of behavioral health care services to individuals at risk for, or involved in, the criminal justice system. For much of the past decade, the passion and effort of this committee and its individual members has helped to shape vitally important criminal justice reforms and initiatives, including numerous NACo resolutions and NACo's nationwide "Stepping Up" Initiative. It has also championed the rights of pre-adjudicated and non-jailed detainees, and the counties who provide their care, to access matching federal Medicaid funds for required behavioral health care.

### **Action: Enrich Your Personal NACBHDD Experience Through Participation**

NACBHDD's past and present success has always been due principally to the vision, effort, and passion of its membership. Individually and collectively, NACBHDD members have been quick to recognize and articulate the challenges facing our field, to advocate for more effective legislative and regulatory options, and to implement more and more just, effective, and fiscally efficient solutions.

Now, more than ever, NACBHDD asks that you contribute your energy, experience, and talent, not only to advance the work of county-based behavioral health and ID/DD services, but to advance the needs of those you serve by advancing your own career. You can do this in many ways:

- Join or lead one of NACBHDD's Committees
- Run for a seat as an officer on the NACBHDD Board of Directors
- Serve a one-year term as NACBHDD's representative on the NACo Board of Directors
- Propose, develop and present one of NACBHDD's monthly webinars, highlighting challenges, solutions, or innovations in service-delivery programs in your state or county.
- Lead a NACBHDD Initiative.

As an active county director and a NACBHDD member, you already have all of the background knowledge and qualifications that you need to fulfill any of these important roles. If you step forward, you can count on your NACBHDD colleagues—Board members, Staff members, Committee members—to help you succeed by sharing our experience, mentoring you, and learning from you.

Unless you step forward to take a more active role, you'll never know the difference you can make. Let me offer just one recent example: Many of you know Leon Evans, a longtime NACBHDD member who currently serves as Executive Director of the Center for Health Care Services in Bexar County, Texas. Through more than a decade of work with his county, with NACBHDD, and later with NACo and members of Congress, Leon and like-minded county directors from Texas and around the country educated and advocated for more, just, and appropriate treatment of individuals with behavioral health problems in the justice system.

From a small beginning, their passion and effort not only helped to shape NACBHDD's strategic direction, but helped build a key alliance with NACo members concerned about the rising costs of law enforcement, incarceration, and high rates of recidivism. The combined efforts of individuals like Leon Evans have since contributed greatly to the development and success of NACo's Stepping Up Initiative and to a series of bipartisan criminal justice and behavioral health measures in numerous state capitals and on Capitol Hill.

Whether your passion is greater justice, improved access to services, more healthy and welcoming communities, or the drive to complete an innovative waiver proposal, you and your NACBHDD colleagues can make a powerful impact by stepping forward into leadership.

To learn more about how to participate more fully in NACBHDD, or about how the experience and resources of NACBHDD can help you succeed in a position of leadership, contact Executive Director Ron Manderscheid at [rmanderscheid@nacbfd.org](mailto:rmanderscheid@nacbfd.org) or 202-942-4296.

*Researched and Written by Dennis Grantham*