

Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA)

First 5 Commission of San Diego

Nadia Privara, MPA, Director, Behavioral Health Services
Yael Koenig, LCSW, Deputy Director, Behavioral Health Services

April 16, 2026





Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) & Integrated Plan (IP)

- California voters approved Prop 1 in 2024, establishing the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA)
 - Modernizes the Mental Health Services Act passed in 2004 and updates funding requirements
- Every county must create a three-year **Integrated Plan** outlining how BHSA funds will be used locally to support specialty behavioral health services and housing interventions
 - The first Integrated Plan covers fiscal years 2026-2029
- The Integrated Plan is built with public input through the Community Planning Process

BHSA Deadlines

- ★ **March 31** – Draft Integrated Plan due
- ★ **June 30** – Final Integrated Plan due
- ★ **July 1** – BHSA officially takes effect

Roles in the Behavioral Health System



- Statewide population-based prevention strategies
- Funds local outreach

Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans (MCP)

- Outpatient, short-term, or lower intensity care
- Coordinate with BHS when higher-acuity services are needed
- Deliver and contract for CalAIM programs

Federally Qualified Health Centers, Community Health Centers, etc.

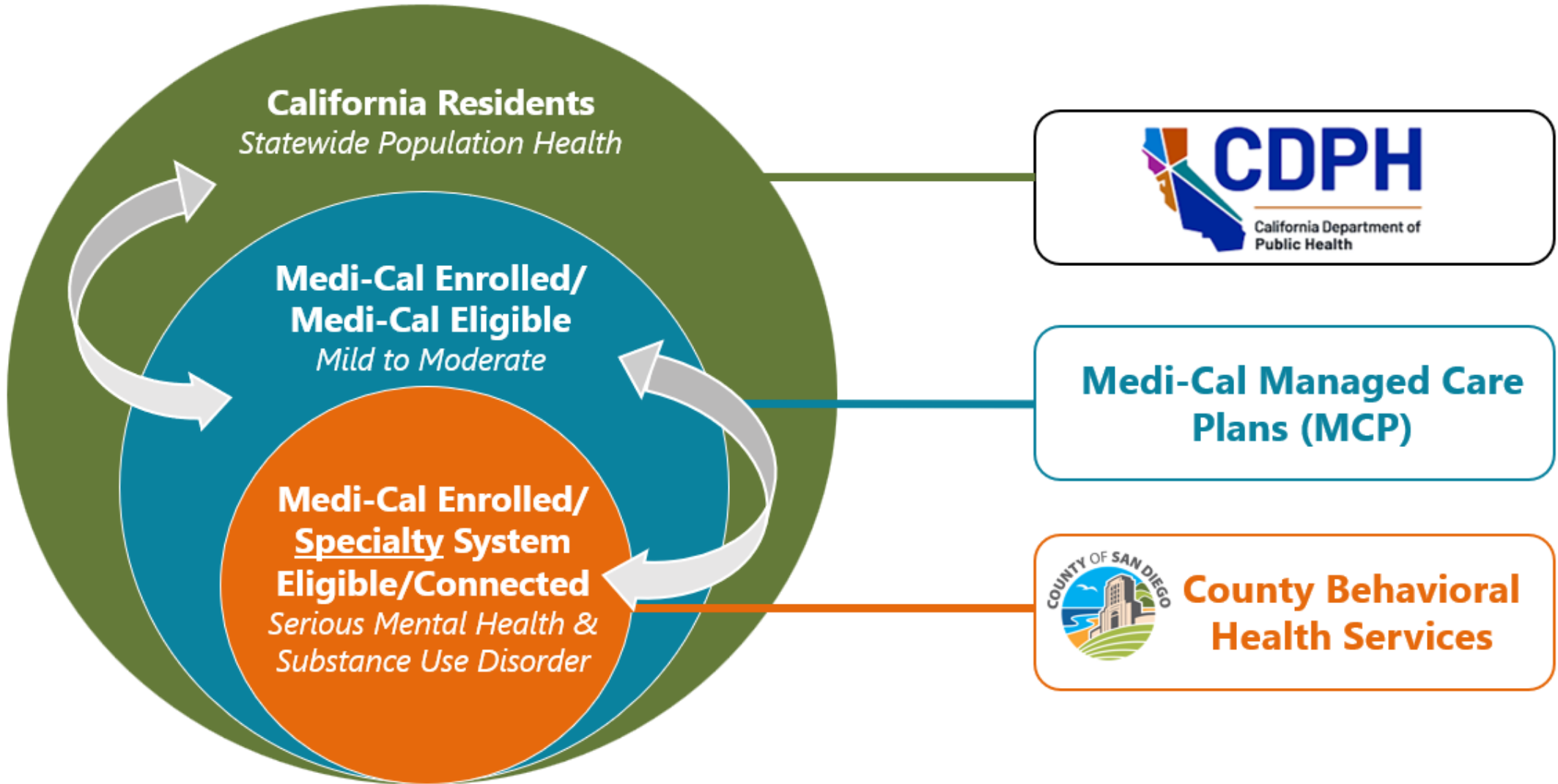
- Mild-to-moderate services
- Contracted by MCPs to deliver culturally rooted, accessible, and community-based care
- Bridge between MCP and County services



County Behavioral Health Services

- Administer specialty services and contracts
- Serve as contractor, provider, and payer
- Coordinate step-down/step-up transitions with MCPs and community providers

Roles in the Behavioral Health System



Shifting from MHSA to BHSA



Mental Health Services Act

*Passed by voters November 2004
Enacted January 2005*

Community Services and Supports

Innovation

Workforce Education and Training

Capital Facilities and Technological Needs

Prevention and Early Intervention

5% State Allocation



Behavioral Health Services Act

*Passed by voters March 2024
Enacted July 2026*

35% Behavioral Health Services and Supports

35% Full Service Partnership

30% Housing

10% State Allocation

Community Planning Process Highlights



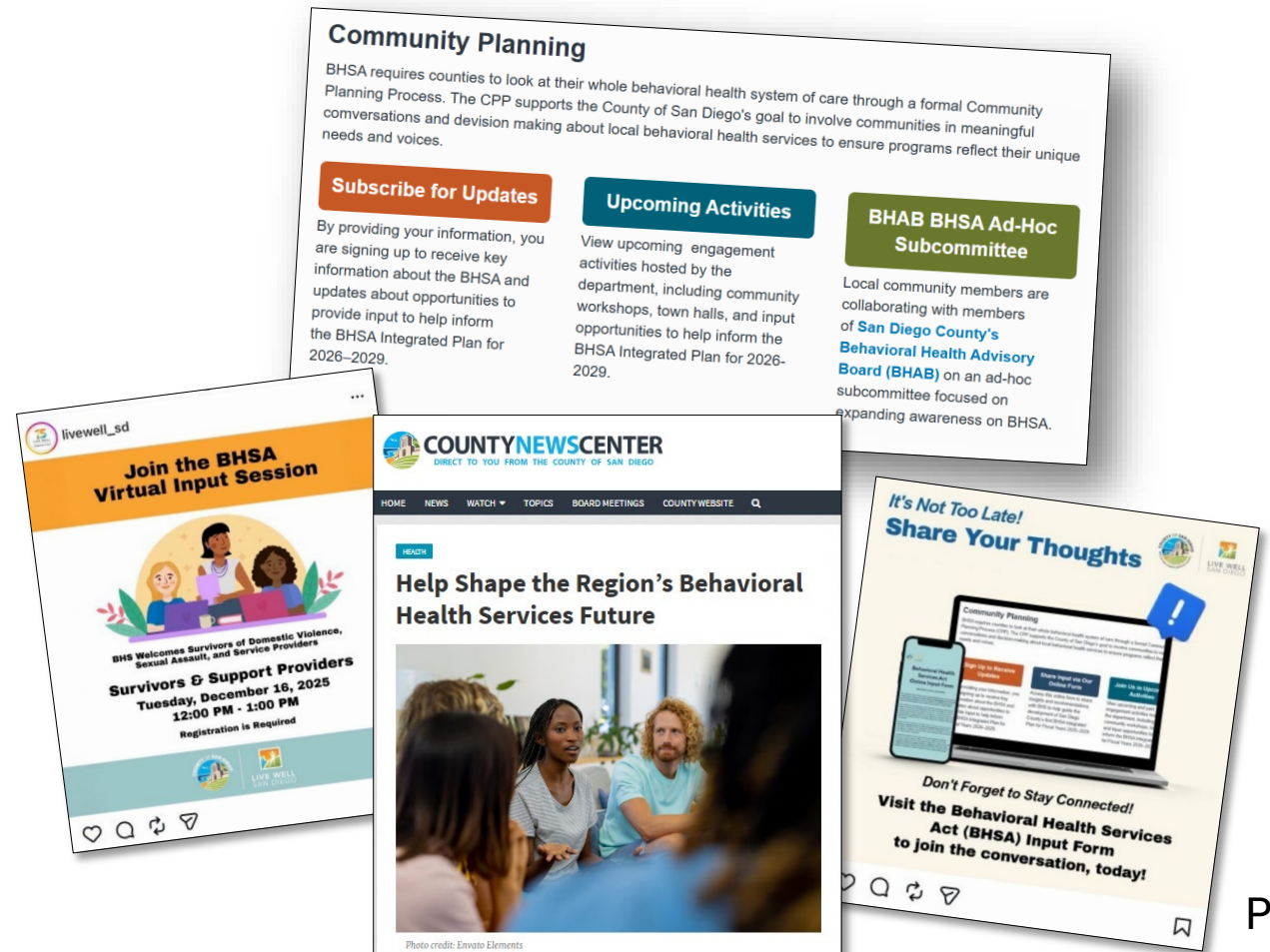
From Apr 2025-Dec 2025, the department engaged over **1,500 individuals** representing over **280 different stakeholder organizations**, with participants reflecting all **29 BHSA stakeholder categories**.

Opportunities promoted via:

- BHSA webpage
- County and community meetings
- County social media accounts
- County News Center
- Outreach materials

Additional numbers at-a-glance:

- **2,839** webpage visits
- **75** distribution list subscriptions
- **4,404** views on social media posts
- **323** input form submissions



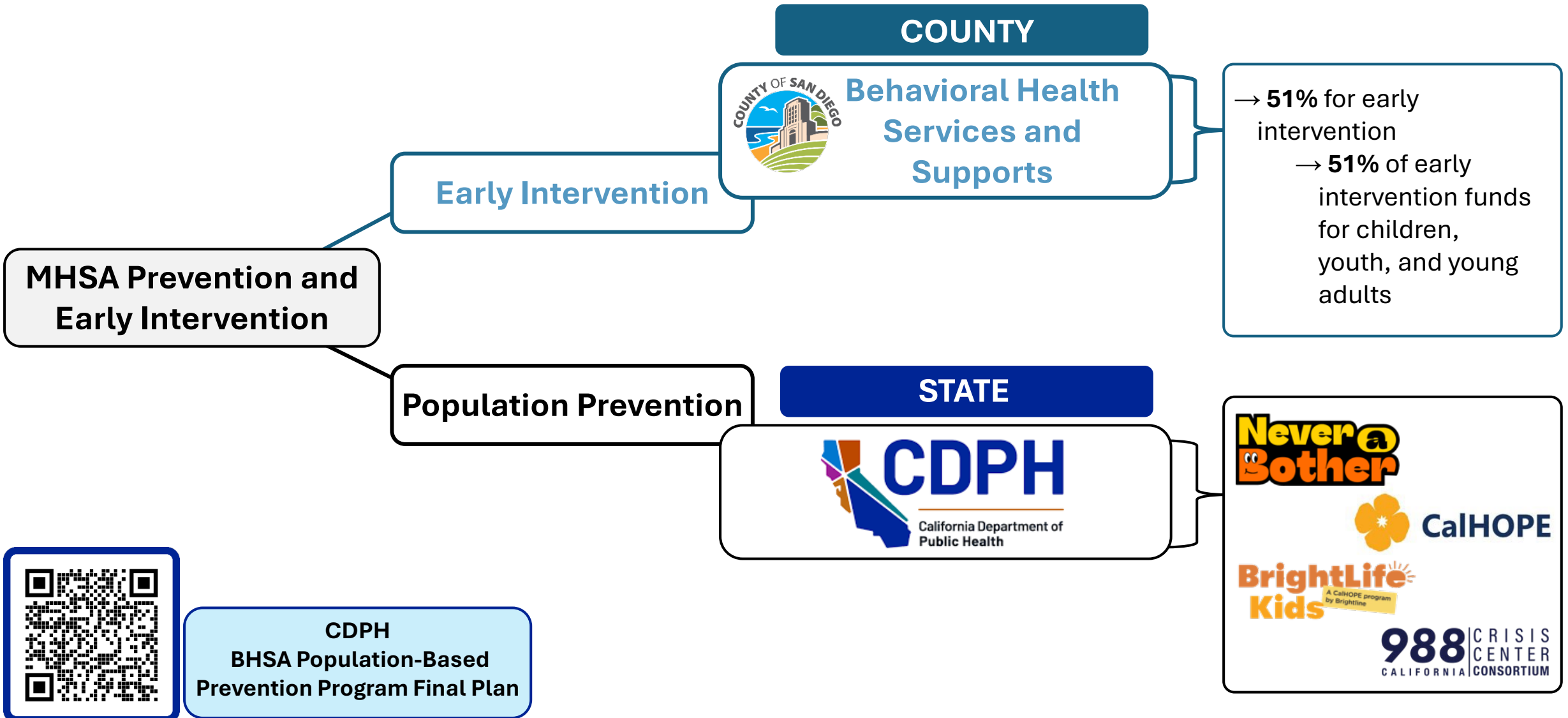
What's New Under BHSA?

- ☑ **New requirements**
- ☑ **Broader use of funding**
- ☑ **Extensive outcomes reporting**
- ☑ **Increased collaboration across stakeholders**
- ☑ **Emphasis on health equity and access**

BHSA does *NOT* change:

- Medi-Cal eligibility rules – these are set by the State
- Counties' role – still function as the specialty behavioral health plan for the county
- Counties' allocations (no new/additional funding)
- Public Comment period and Public Hearing requirements

Changes to Prevention & Early Intervention



CDPH

CDPH
BHSAs Population-Based
Prevention Program Final Plan

BHSA Category Requirement



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES (BHSS)

- BHSS includes the most service components
- Mental health and substance use treatment and recovery services including therapy, case management, and medication support
- Includes early intervention programs and Community Defined Evidence Based Practices

BHSA Requires:

- 51% of total BHSS funds for early intervention programs
- 51% of these funds for TAY and youth early intervention



County of San Diego Early Intervention Investment

- **78.8%** of total BHSS funds budgeted for early intervention programs
- **51.8%** of BHSS early intervention programs budgeted for individuals 25 or younger



Youth Optimal Care Pathways (OCP) Model



Principles of Developing the Youth OCP Model:

- Estimate need for specialty treatment specific to the age ranges 0-5, 6-11, 12-17, and 18-25
- Meet State benchmarks for the percentage of youth receiving specialty treatment in each age group
- Ensure all youth in our system are connected to outpatient care
- Divert from emergency departments to County crisis response services
- Expand access to intensive community-based services
- Ensure adequate residential treatment capacity to reduce extended hospital stays



Expanding capacity in 4 key areas

Crisis Response

**Early Intervention and
Outpatient**

**Intensive Community-
Based Care**

Residential Treatment

Early Childhood Treatment Services

- **KidStart Clinic**

- Contract with Rady Children's Health
- Tailored services for youth 0-5 with complex developmental needs

- **Para Las Familias**

- Contract with Episcopal Community Services
- Caregiver-child therapy for Medi-Cal eligible youth 0-5

- **ChildNET**

- Contract with Vista Hill Foundation
- Incorporates Incredible Years curriculum – Preschool Basic Program focus 3-6 years

Additional Evaluation & Treatment Services



- **Development Evaluation Clinic (DEC)**
 - Contract with Rady Children's Health
 - Developmental evaluation and referral services for infants and preschoolers
- **School-Based Incredible Years**
 - Six regional contracts
 - Early intervention services for preschool to third grade
 - Recently redesigned for Medi-Cal reimbursement
- **ADAPT**
 - Contract with Vista Hill Foundation
 - Prenatal through child's first year

Provide Input on the BHSA Integrated Plan



The BHSA Integrated Plan public comment period opened on March 17 and will run through **April 15**. You can provide feedback in several ways:

Visit **Engage San Diego County** to view the BHSA Integrated Plan and leave feedback



Visit the **County BHSA** website to view the Integrated Plan and leave feedback



Phone: 619-584-5063
Toll Free: 888-977-6763

Email:
Engage.BHS@sdcounty.ca.gov

The BHSA **Public Hearing** will be held the **May 7th Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) meeting**

Thank You
Questions?

