

Panel on Dual Diagnosis

Summarized by Thomas T. Thomas

At our November 20 meeting, we heard three people with organizations that work with both serious mental illness and substance abuse disorder. They described the services offered and approaches used by their various agencies to support people in recovery from co-occurring disorders.

- **Ryan Gardner, LCSW, MBA**, of Bonita House, Inc., is Chief Clinical and Administrative Officer. He previously worked in government settings including the Veterans Administration.
- **Brian Campany, MA, LMFT**, of New Bridge Foundation, is currently the Assistant Program Director for the Helios Program.
- **Maisha Weinstein**, of the East Bay Community Recovery Project (EBCRP), is Assistant Program Manager for the project's homeless and case management programs.

New Bridge Foundation (<https://www.newbridgefoundation.org>, or call 866-772-8075) is a nonprofit organization with 52 years of experience, licensed by the state and accredited by [CARE International](#). Its facility at Hearst and Scenic avenues in North Berkeley offers a range of services from detox programs to satellite housing.

The Helios Program is its short-term residential and intensive outpatient program. Admissions are paid by private insurance (e.g., Kaiser, Blue Cross/Blue Shield). “We follow the biopsychosocial and spiritual model using groups, with both day treatment and outpatient services,” Campany said. “Clients are assigned an individual counselor, and we have a diverse staff, including both veteran and active-duty personnel, so we can handle the complex mental health issues of veterans and military people.” The Helios Program has a capacity of 35 beds.



BRIAN CAMPANY, MA, LMFT

Bridge One is the foundation's program for MediCal and federal pretrial clients. It features long-term residency and is based on behavior modification techniques. This program has 50 beds and 40 more in satellite housing.

New Bridge takes referrals, self-referrals, and walk-ins, with no waiting list. The only criteria are a substance abuse problem coupled with serious mental illness. New clients must be willing to undergo detox and, depending on the severity of the condition, may be sent to a hospital for treatment. The program can handle four to six detox patients at a time. The foundation is part of the new [Drug MediCal](#)

[Organized Delivery System](#) (DMC-ODS), modeled after the American Society of Addiction Medicine’s criteria for substance use. All of the programs are based on abstinence rather than on “harm reduction.”

Mental health diagnoses that New Bridge typically handles include depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and bipolar, although sometimes clients present with schizophrenia. “If mental health issues become primary over substance abuse,” he said, “we can refer clients to other organizations, like Bonita House.”

East Bay Community Recovery Project is a behavioral health component of LifeLong Medical Care (<https://www.lifelongmedical.org>, or call 510-446-7180), which in turn is funded by Alameda County Behavioral Health Care. The program is located at 2577 San Pablo Avenue at 27th Street in Oakland. This is a day-support program operating 9 am to 1 pm, Monday to Friday, and serves a cold breakfast and hot lunch.

“We treat substance abuse with a harm reduction approach,” Weinstein said,

“but we primarily address mental health issues. We offer different group programs based on the client’s needs.” Clients may have either condition, which do not have to be co-occurring for a person to enter the program. Each client is assigned a counselor, and the program has a LifeLong psychiatrist who is available once a week for medication and referrals to other treatment programs.



MAISHA WEINSTEIN

Services include Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP), drug testing, counseling on substance use, on-site medical screening, life skills development, and connection to other community resources.

The project has the capacity to take up to twenty participants at once, although the active number is usually six to nine. “Clients come and go,” Weinstein said. EBCRP would like to see clients attend all five days a week, “but the program is flexible,” she said.

The project also provides homeless services, for whom it offers intake, case management, and short-term counseling. “We can give you a place to shower, charge your cell phone, and obtain an ID,” she said.

EBCRP takes clients with MediCal funding for as long as the person needs, although he or she is re-evaluated every six months, and the mental health condition must persist for a long time. However, the program cannot take clients in a [Full Service Partnership](#), because that would represent double-billing.

Bonita House, Inc. (<https://bonitahouse.org>, or call 510-923-1099) “has been a pillar of the East Bay since 1971,” Gardner said. It started in a Victorian on Bonita Street in North Berkeley, where the organization still maintains 15 beds in a co-ed facility for clients age 18 and up. But the program has expanded over the years. The main offices are now at 6333 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 102, in Oakland.

The organization runs a subsidized housing partnership with the City of Berkeley at five different sites. It will soon be participating in the [CalWORKS Welfare-to-Work](#) program, in partnership with the Social Security Administration, for those whose welfare benefits would otherwise be reduced or cut off.

Bonita House has two wellness centers: Casa Ubuntu (“House of Human Kindness”) at Eastmont Town Center, 7200 Bancroft Avenue, Suite 267, in Oakland; and the Berkeley Creative Wellness Center, at South Berkeley Community Church, 1802 Fairview Street, Berkeley. The Berkeley center offers day programs with support and self-esteem groups, art therapy, recovery, life skills, and pre-vocational training, and currently serves about 130 people each year. The Oakland center offers Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) outreach, engagement, and transitioning services, peer-driven support, individual placement and support (IPS) referrals, and outpatient services, including WRAP, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), case management, and medication management. Services are available Monday to Friday at both locations and on Saturday in Oakland.



RYAN GARDNER, LCSW, MBA

The organization fields an In Home Outreach Team (IHOT), accessible through Alameda County’s [ACCESS Program](#) (800-491-9099), for short-term outreach, engagement, and linkage to community services for individuals with severe mental illness. This service offers peer-based engagement for up to 90 days, aimed at consumers who are just coming out of the hospital.

A new program for Bonita House, which will start after the first of the year, is the Community Assessment and Transportation Team (CATT). The team consists of an emergency medical technician (EMT) and a psychiatrist who come to the client’s or family member’s home in a non-ambulance-type vehicle. This service will only be available in Oakland and nearby cities—generally from San Leandro to Fremont—because Berkeley/Albany already has its own Mobile Crisis Team. CATT will also be routed through the 911 phone tree as appropriate.

Bonita House offers Level 1 case management to about 220 people. With this service, they get medication management (but not methadone for heroin users) and case management with practitioners at the bachelor’s and master’s degree level.

The 15-bed residential facility located at the original Bonita Street site offers various programs, including CBT and WRAP. Treatment is through private insurance or Medicare/MediCal. Clients need to be ambulatory and receive a TB test and health test. The facility also takes referrals from centers like John George Psychiatric Hospital in San Leandro.

Bonita House has signed on to Alameda County’s new community health record program, called [AC Care Connect](#). This program unifies a patient’s records—for example, the signed release form for families to access patient information. To qualify, a client must be enrolled in MediCal and be in a comprehensive case

management program, have experienced homelessness in the past 24 months, and been a frequent user of at least two crisis systems.

Q. Do your dual-diagnosis programs address “process disorders” like gambling, videogaming, and eating addictions?

New Bridge will treat them to some extent but refers eating disorders to other providers, but its main focus is still substance abuse. EBCRP’s focus is on mental illness and is not licensed to treat substance abuse. And Bonita House will treat such disorders as tertiary conditions. Because MediCal does not recognize these disorders, the programs it supports cannot bill for them.

Q. How many of the homeless have some a mental illness?

The consensus view was that 90% of homeless people have some form of mental illness, and at the very least suffer from depression and anxiety.