



From Silos to Solutions
Cross System Implementation in
California's Behavioral Health and
Criminal Justice Reform Initiatives

Convening Program

September 25 - 26, 2025

Los Angeles, California



W2D 2025 – WHAT TO EXPECT

Convening Goals and Approach

The goal of Words to Deeds (W2D) is to convene thought leaders from California’s state and county behavioral health and public safety departments to discuss implementation challenges and highlight solutions that prevent people with behavioral health (i.e., mental health and/or substance use disorder) needs from becoming involved with the criminal justice system.

By establishing peer-to-peer dialogue, we strive to establish the platform for increased relationship-building, learning, and continuous improvement across systems and jurisdictions that can help practitioners sustain more outcomes-focused and responsive services.

The expected discussion will be lively. Questions to consider include:

- What data/measurements from your program(s) have been most impactful?
- What are key takeaways/decisions made as a result of that information?
- What would you/your organization like to change, or want to have done or do differently?
- What does future success look like?
- What requests or resources do you need from your peers or state to be successful?
- What is the call to action for attendees?

Also proposed are continued workgroups/communities of practice comprised of interested attendees and others who may wish to join post-meeting. These groups may meet during the next 12 months, maybe quarterly (or as the group decides), to continue exploring the validity/usefulness of the convening’s insights and action items and report back to W2D 2025 on their discoveries.

Insights and action items from W2D will be useful to policymakers, service providers, and members of the public in understanding the benefits of and progress toward reducing criminal justice involvement for people with behavioral health needs, promoting the goal of prevention and early intervention.

We will submit a report to the state to enhance the future delivery of forensic behavioral health care and related serves. The report will highlight recommendations and challenges prioritized during the conference by speakers and attendees.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

Welcome

Our convening begins with a summary of past and present relevant data reporting efforts to lay a foundation for the subsequent Words to Deeds Convening Sessions. Each session will include a discussion of key priority metrics to track and evaluate at the state level the performance of the public systems that serve individuals with behavioral health needs who are or are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system. One of the convening's goals is to ensure that we come away with a sense of a core set of metrics regarding how mental health clients are touching the criminal justice system.

DAY 1

9:00 a.m. Opening Remarks

- **Brenda Grealish** – Executive Officer, Commission for Behavioral Health
- **Kit Wall** – Project Director, Words to Deeds
- **Caroline Whistler** – Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder, Third Sector

9:30 a.m. Session 1: *A Glance at the Numbers Statewide- Full Service Partnerships*

Facilitator: **Oscar Benitez** – Managing Director of Diversion & Reentry, Third Sector

- **Hallie Fader-Towe** – Director of Justice & Health Initiatives, Behavioral Health, Council on State Governments Justice Center
- **Marcus Galeste** – Policy & Evaluation Research Scientist, Commission for Behavioral Health

10:00 a.m. Session 2: *Prop 36 - Early Lessons Learned on Drug Offenses*

Facilitator: **Magnus Lofstrom** – Policy Director, Public Policy Institute of California

- **Phebe Bell** – Director, Behavioral Health Department, Nevada County
- **Michael Rand** – Commander, San Diego County Sheriff's Office
- **Yvette Verastegui** – Supervising Judge, Criminal Division, County of Los Angeles Superior Court of California

11:30 a.m. Lunch, Paradigm Awards Presentation & Networking

Emcee: **Bill Brown** – Sheriff-Coroner, Santa Barbara County; Past President, California State Sheriffs' Association; Commissioner, Commission for Behavioral Health

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025 (continued)

- **County Champion: Sarah Eberhardt-Rios**, Director, Sutter County Health and Human Services
Presented by: Jessica Headley Ternes, Behavioral Health Director, Third Sector
- **State Champion: Jim Mayer**, Adjunct Professor, McGeorge School of Law
Presented by: Will Rhett, Managing Director of Behavioral Health, Third Sector
- **Lifetime Champion: David Panush**, President, California Health Policy Strategies
Presented by: David Meyer, Clinical Professor, Institute of Psychiatry, Law and Behavioral Sciences, USC Keck School of Medicine

12:45 p.m. **Session 3: *Building on Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) Solutions Workgroup Recommendations & Strengthening the Continuum of Care***

Facilitator: Hallie Fader-Towe – Director of Justice & Health Initiatives, Behavioral Health, Council on State Governments Justice Center

- **Chris Edens** – Chief Deputy Director, California Department of State Hospitals
- **Ambar Faizi** – Assistant Medical Director, California Department of State Hospitals
- **Melanie Scott** – Assistant Deputy Director, California Department of State Hospitals

2:00 p.m. **Break – 15 minutes**

2:15 p.m. **Session 4: *Early Lessons Learned in CalAIM's Justice-Involved Reentry Initiative Implementation***

Facilitator: Jessica Headley Ternes – Behavioral Health Director, Third Sector

- **Janene Delmundo** – Deputy Director, Special Projects/ Programs, California Correctional Health Care Services
- **Sarah Eberhardt-Rios** – Director, Sutter County Health and Human Services
- **Phuong Luu** – Sutter-Yuba Health Officer, Sutter County Public Health
- **Christa McCauley** – Program Manager Jail Services, Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health

3:45 p.m. **Break – 15 minutes**

4:00 p.m. **Session 5: *The Power of Peers - Bridging Lived Experience into Forensic Behavioral Health***

Facilitator: Rayshell Chambers – Executive Director, Painted Brain; Commissioner, Commission for Behavioral Health

- **April Giambra** – Deputy Director of Clinical Services, Lake County Behavioral Health Services

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

- **Elise Jones** – Behavioral Health Director, Lake County Behavioral Health Services

5:00 p.m. Adjourn

DAY 2

9:00 a.m. Welcome & Logistics

9:10 a.m. Session 6: *Mobile Crisis Response Models: Recent Challenges & Successes*

Facilitator: Michelle Cabrera – Executive Director, County Behavioral Health Association of California

- **Alicia Adams** – Mental Health Program Manager, Lake County Behavioral Health Services
- **April Giambra** – Deputy Director of Clinical Services, Lake County Behavioral Health Services
- **Dale Stoebe** – Chief of Police, Lakeport Police Department

10:10 a.m. Session 7: *Housing as Public Safety & Well-Being*

Facilitator: Lahela Mattox – Chief Operations Officer, San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness

- **Sarah Hunter** – Senior Behavioral Scientist and Director, RAND Center on Housing and Homelessness
- **Barry Lindstrom** – Vice President of Operations, Amity Foundation

11:10 a.m. Lunch

12:00 p.m. Session 8: *Care Court - Learnings From an Early Implementor*

Facilitator: Frank Congine – Health Services Assistant Deputy Director, Orange County Health Care Agency

- **Veronica Kelley** – Director, Orange County Health Care Agency
- **Ian Kemmer** – Behavioral Health Director, Orange County Health Care Agency
- **Sara Nakada** – Orange County Public Defender

1:00 p.m. Session 9: *Integrating Peers into the Continuum of Care Workforce Pipeline & Training*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

Facilitator: Sharmil Shah – Branch Chief Behavioral Health & Policy, Health Workforce Development,
Department of Health Care Access and Information

- **Sharon Bean** – Jail Population Manager, Camden County, New Jersey
- **Tedman Cheung** – Senior Clinical Director, Amity Foundation
- **Kristine Chavez** – Clinical Director, Amity Foundation

2:00 p.m.

Closing Remarks: *Building Toward a Shared Narrative*

- **Oscar Benitez** – Managing Director of Diversion & Reentry, Third Sector
- **Brenda Grealish** – Executive Director, Commission for Behavioral Health
- **Kit Wall** – Project Director, Words to Deeds

Speaker Bios



W2D PARADIGM AWARDS HONOREES

Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible, and suddenly, you are doing the impossible. — Francis of Assisi

Words to Deeds recognizes leaders in criminal justice and mental health who champion efforts to end criminalization of individuals with mental illness by supporting proven strategies that promote early intervention, access to effective treatments, a planned reentry, and the preservation of public safety. The Leadership Group nominates and votes for all honorees.

- 2024**
- **Community Champion: Rayshell Chambers** – Executive Director, Painted Brain; Commissioner, Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
 - **County Champion: Luke Bergmann** – Director of Behavioral Health Services, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency
 - **Law Enforcement Champion: Cherylynn Lee** – Police Psychologist/ Behavioral Science Unit Manager, Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office
 - **State Champion Toby Ewing** – Executive Director, Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
- 2022**
- **Law Enforcement Champion: Lisa Heintz** – Director of Legislation and Special Projects for the Federal Court Receiver, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
 - **State Champion: Stephanie Welch** – Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health, California Health and Human Services Agency
 - **Community Champion: Sandri Kramer** – Director of Community Relations and Special Projects, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
- 2019**
- **Law Enforcement Champion: Wendy Still** – Chief Probation Officer, Alameda County
 - **State Champion: Mark Grabau, PhD** – Chief Psychologist, Forensic Services Division, California Department of State Hospitals
 - **Judicial Champion: Honorable Eileen Moore** – Associate Justice, California Court of Appeal
- 2018**
- **Law Enforcement Champion: Charles Dempsey** – Detective III, Officer-In-Charge of the Administrative Training Detail, Mental Evaluation Unit, Los Angeles Police Department
 - **Judicial Champion: Honorable James Bianco** – Site Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court Mental Health Court

W2D PARADIGM AWARDS HONOREES

- 2018 (cont.)**
- **Behavioral Health Champion: Kita Curry, PhD** – Chief Executive Officer, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
- 2017**
- **Law Enforcement Champion: Terri McDonald** – Chief Probation Officer, Los Angeles County
 - **State Champion: Tina Wooton** – Manager, Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness; Chair, California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
 - **Lifetime Achievement: Charles Walters, PhD** – Law Enforcement Consultant, Past Member-Council on Mentally Ill Offenders, Retired Assistant Sheriff, Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department
- 2016**
- **Law Enforcement Champion: George Gascon** – District Attorney, San Francisco County
 - **State Champion: Bill Brown** – Sheriff-Coroner, Santa Barbara County
 - **County Champion: Jackie Lacey** – District Attorney, Los Angeles County
- 2015**
- **Law Enforcement Champion: Senator Jim Beall** – California State Senator
 - **Judicial Champion: Judge Richard J. Loftus, Jr.** – Santa Clara County Superior Court
 - **County Champion: Jo Robinson, MFT** – Director, San Francisco Department of Public Health, Behavioral Health Services
 - **Behavioral Health Champion: Linda Boyd, RN, BSM, MN** – Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Emergency Outreach Bureau
- 2014**
- **Law Enforcement Champion: Norm Hurst** – Deputy Chief, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department (Retired)
 - **County Champion: Susan Adams** – Marin County Supervisor
 - **Behavioral Health Champion: Mark Refowitz** – Director, Orange County Health Care Agency
 - **Criminal Justice Champion: Lisa Rodriguez** – San Diego County Assistant District Attorney
- 2013**
- **Community Champion: Mark Gale** – California Treatment Advocacy Coalition, Los Angeles
 - **County Champion: Scott MacDonald** – Santa Cruz County Probation Chief
 - **Law Enforcement Champion: Curtis J. Hill** – San Benito County Sheriff (Retired)
 - **Lifetime Achievement: David Meyer, Esq.** – Research Scholar, Institute of Psychiatry, Law and Behavioral Sciences, USC Keck School of Medicine

W2D PARADIGM AWARDS HONOREES *(continued)*

2013

Inaugural Paradigm Awards Event

- **Law Enforcement Champion: Tona Wakefield** – Bringing Our Community Home, Santa Barbara
- **Judicial Champion: Judge Stephen V. Manley** – Santa Clara County Superior Court
- **Law Enforcement Champion: Lee Baca** – Los Angeles County Sheriff
- **County Champion: Jennifer Johnson** – San Francisco County Deputy Public Defender
- **State Champion: Senator Darrell Steinberg** – California State Senate President pro Tempore
- **Lifetime Achievement: Helen M. Thomson** – Yolo County Board of Supervisors and Assembly District 8 Representative (Retired)

W2D 2025 – LEADERSHIP GROUP

Our Mission

The leaders in criminal justice and behavioral health participating in this effort strive to end the criminalization of individuals with mental illness by supporting proven strategies that promote early intervention, access to effective treatments, a planned reentry, and the preservation of public safety.

Our Vision

A true shift in the paradigm between criminal justice and behavioral health will embody an effective jail diversion system that fosters a successful and ongoing exchange of information among courts, criminal justice agencies, mental health professions, governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations, to achieve a substantial positive change in the way individuals with mental illness are treated within our communities.

2025 Leadership Group

- **Deanna Adams** – Senior Analyst, Judicial Council of California, Criminal Justice Services, Operations and Programs Division
- **Jenny Bayardo** – Executive Officer, California Behavioral Health Council
- **Oscar Benitez** – Managing Director of Diversion & Reentry, Third Sector
- **Autumn Boylan** – Deputy Director, Office of Strategic Partnerships, California Department of Health Care Services
- **Ashley Breth** – Assistant Deputy Director, Community Forensic Partnerships Division, Department of State Hospitals
- **Bill Brown** – Sheriff-Coroner, Santa Barbara County
- **Michelle Cabrera** – Executive Director, County Behavioral Health Directors Association
- **Cathy Coyne** – Government Affairs Liaison (Retired), California State Sheriffs’ Association
- **Hallie Fader-Towe** – Director of Justice & Health Initiatives, Behavioral Health, Council on State Governments Justice Center
- **Grace Ferguson** – Executive Associate, Urban Counties of California
- **Marcus Galeste** – Research Scientist, Commission for Behavioral Health
- **Brenda Grealish** – Executive Officer, Commission for Behavioral Health
- **Carmen Green** – Executive Director, California State Sheriffs’ Association
- **Kathryn Jett** – Senior Policy Consultant, Shatterproof
- **Karen Larsen** – Chief Executive Officer, The Steinberg Institute
- **Stephen V. Manley** – Superior Court Judge, Santa Clara County
- **Lahela Mattox** – Chief Operations Officer, San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless
- **Rosie McCool** – Deputy Director, Chief Probation Officers of California
- **David Meyer** – Clinical Professor, Institute of Psychiatry, Law and Behavioral Sciences, USC Keck School of Medicine

W2D 2025 – LEADERSHIP GROUP (continued)

- **Ryan Morimune** – Legislative Advocate, Administration of Justice, California State Association of Counties
- **Kevin O’Connell** – Research Consultant, O’Connell Research
- **Jolie Onodera** – Senior Legislative Advocate, Health and Behavioral Health, California State Association of Counties
- **Mike Radford** – Bureau Chief, Training Program Services Bureau, Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training
- **Stephanie Regular** – Assistant Public Defender, Office of the Public Defender, Alameda County
- **Will Rhett** – Managing Director of Behavioral Health, Third Sector
- **Tyler Rinde** – Director of Government Affairs, California Psychological Association
- **Kiran Sahota** – President, Concepts Forward Consulting
- **Melanie Scott** – Assistant Deputy Director, Community Forensic Partnerships Division, Department of State Hospitals
- **Albert M. Senella** – President, California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives; President and Chief Executive Officer, Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc.
- **Adrienne Shilton** – Director of Public Policy and Strategy, The California Alliance of Child and Family Services
- **Jessica Headley Ternes** – Behavioral Health Director, Third Sector
- **Linda Tomasello** – Consultant, Crisis Intervention Training
- **Kit Wall** – Words to Deeds Project Director, Kit Wall Productions
- **Tracey Whitney** – Assistant Head Deputy, Writs and Appeals Division, Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office
- **Molly Willenbring** – Consultant, Leadership Benefiting Nonprofit Organizations
- **Helene Zentner** – Field Representative, California Board of State and Community Corrections
- **Carrie Zoller** – Supervising Attorney, Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts



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