

## WORDS TO DEEDS 2025

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

### Speaker Biographies

#### **Alica Adams, Program Manager, Lake County Behavioral Health Services**

Alicia Adams, M.L.S., is a dedicated professional in behavioral health with a career spanning advocacy, crisis response, and program leadership. At Lake County Behavioral Health Services, she supervises the Justice Involved, Adult, and CalWORKs teams, ensuring coordinated care and equitable access to services for diverse populations.

Her path in behavioral health began as a Sexual Assault Victim Advocate and Crisis Counselor, where she provided critical support to individuals in crisis. She went on to serve as Program Coordinator at the Lake Family Resource Center, overseeing community-based initiatives, and later partnered with the Lakeport Police Department as a Crisis Intervention Specialist, building prevention, training, and intervention capacity.

Beyond her leadership role in county services, Alicia is an adjunct faculty member at Mendocino College, where she contributes to curriculum design and guides students in the Administration of Justice Program. With a strong foundation in law studies and a commitment to collaboration, Alicia is passionate about building systems that promote resilience, justice, and holistic well-being across her community.

#### **Sharon Bean, Camden County Jail Population Manager, Justice Systems Reform & Innovations Unit Supervisor**

Sharon Bean is the Jail Population Manager for the New Jersey Camden County Correctional Facility and the Supervisor of the Camden County Justice System Reform and Innovations Unit. Since 2000, Sharon has worked with the state of NJ to reduce the unnecessary incarceration of both youth and adults. In her current role, Sharon works with the Camden County criminal justice system and community-based stakeholders to safely reduce the adult jail population, as well as oversees the creation, implementation, and monitoring of a continuum of policies, practices, and programs to benefit citizens returning home upon release from incarceration. In addition, following selection as a MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Innovation Site, Sharon has worked to establish a comprehensive community engagement strategy and a network of NuEntry Opportunity Specialists (NOS)/peers with lived criminal justice experience to help bridge the many divides that exist between traditional system stakeholders and the community they strive to affect and impact positively. Sharon Bean has her Master's in Public Administration and Bachelor's in Criminal Justice from Rutgers University, Camden.

#### **Phebe Bell, Director, Behavioral Health Department of Nevada County**

Phebe Bell is the Director of Behavioral Health and Homelessness for Nevada County. In this role, she oversees specialty mental health services for children and adults, substance use disorder services, and a comprehensive crisis system. She also manages homeless services for the County, including outreach programs, supportive housing, and interim housing. Phebe has previously been president of the California Behavioral Health Directors' Association and is currently Treasurer of the California Mental Health Services Authority, and is passionate about working to improve safety net services for

vulnerable people. Phebe has a Master's in Social Work from Portland State University and a BA from Yale University.

### **Oscar Benitez, Managing Director - Diversion & Reentry, Third Sector**

Oscar leads the Diversion and Reentry Practice Area at Third Sector. He designs and implements solutions to reform criminal-legal and homeless systems by working with state and county departments, community-based organizations, and philanthropy to deliver improved evidence-based therapies, career pathway training, and permanent supportive housing programs. For nearly a decade, he and his teams have improved government systems in 12 states by convening partners like probation departments, workforce development boards, behavioral health departments, and housing authorities to launch cross-departmental initiatives that reduce incarceration and homelessness and improve employment and well-being. Before joining Third Sector in the Bay Area, Oscar was an investor, broadcaster, and researcher after starting his career in the LA Mayor's Office. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, completed the Bridge Program at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, and was selected as a Gates Millennium Scholar through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

### **Bill Brown, Sheriff-Coroner, Santa Barbara County, and Commissioner, Commission for Behavioral Health**

Bill Brown has served as Santa Barbara County's Sheriff-Coroner since January 9, 2007. He was first elected to that constitutional office on November 7, 2006, and re-elected to a second term in June 2010, a third term in June 2014, a fourth term in June 2018, and his present fifth term in June 2022.

Beginning his law enforcement career in 1977 with the Pacifica Police Department in the San Francisco Bay Area, Bill Brown transferred to the Inglewood Police Department in 1980. He served the Los Angeles County community as a police officer, sergeant, lieutenant, and acting captain until 1992, when he was selected as chief of police for the City of Moscow, Idaho. In that position, he was responsible for overseeing police operations for both the City of Moscow and the University of Idaho. In 1995, Brown was selected as the chief of police for the City of Lompoc, being only the eighth person to hold the title of police chief in that community since it incorporated in 1899. He led the Lompoc Police Department for the next 11 years until being elected to his present office.

Sheriff Brown received his master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California in 1995. He was president of the 91st Class of the Delinquency Control Institute. He is a graduate of the Northwest Command College, the 169th Session of the FBI National Academy, and the 33rd Session of the FBI National Executive Institute. Sheriff Brown was elected by his peers as President of the Major County Sheriffs of America and began his two-year term on February 9, 2024. Sheriff Brown is also a past president of both the California State Sheriffs' Association and the California Police Chiefs' Association, the only person to have ever held both positions. Since 2010, he has served as a Commissioner on the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission for the State of California, and he leads Santa Barbara County's version of "Stepping Up," a National Initiative to reduce the Number of Mentally Ill People in Jails. In 2022, Sheriff Brown started

“Project Opioid” in Santa Barbara County, an initiative that regularly convenes a diverse group of high-level, county-wide leaders committed to raising awareness about, and reducing the number of overdose deaths from fentanyl and other illicit drugs. He is also Chairman of the Santa Barbara County Law Enforcement Chiefs (C.L.E.C.).

**Michelle Cabrera, Executive Director, CBHDA**

Michelle Cabrera joined CBHDA as Executive Director in May 2019. Prior to joining CBHDA she served as the Healthcare Director for the California State Council of the Services Employees International Union (SEIU California), where she advocated on behalf of health care workers and consumers, including SEIU California’s county behavioral health workforce, on issues related to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Health Equity, Health4All, and cost containment, among others. She served as a Senior Consultant for the Assembly Human Services Committee, where she specialized in child welfare issues and staffed legislation that extended foster care in California to age 21. Ms. Cabrera also served as a Program Officer for the California Healthcare Foundation, liaising with state health policy in Sacramento.

Ms. Cabrera served as a member of Governor Newsom’s Council of Regional Homeless Advisors and was recently appointed to the California Disability and Aging Community Living Advisory Committee, representing the needs of individuals with behavioral health conditions. Ms. Cabrera has been an inaugural member of the National Quality Forum’s Standing Committee on Disparities and has served on the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN) Board of Directors since 2015.

**Rayshell Chambers, Commissioner, CA Commission for Behavioral Health**

Rayshell is the co-founder and Executive Director of Painted Brain, a mental health tech nonprofit based in Los Angeles, that provides peer-based services and practice training in technology and clinical mental health. She is also an independent consultant who provides capacity-building support and grant writing for small nonprofits that serve communities of color. She has dedicated more than 20 years of her personal and professional pursuits to designing and advocating for comprehensive health and human service programs that enhance the human condition of the most vulnerable populations. In recognition of her leadership, Chambers was appointed in 2022 by Governor Gavin Newsom as a Commissioner for the Commission for Behavioral Health, representing consumers and clients.

Rayshell holds a bachelor’s degree in Sociology and a Master’s of Public Policy and Administration. She utilizes her cultural experiences and lived mental health challenges as a peer to design culturally responsive programs.

**Tedman Cheung, Clinical Director, Amity Foundation**

Tedman Cheung is the Senior Clinical Director at Amity Foundation, an organization serving the reentry population for the last 40 years. For the past 20 years, Tedman Cheung has been focused on connecting vulnerable populations to mental health services on a micro and macro level. Tedman Cheung currently oversees the Office of Diversion and Reentry program at Amity, which provides wrap-around services such as supportive housing, mental health services, crisis intervention, and

substance abuse treatment. Tedman Cheung's goal is now focused on developing the clinical workforce needed to properly address the multitude of issues that the justice-involved population faces, in order to help individuals break out of their cycle.

**Frank Congine, Orange County Health Care Agency, Health Services Assistant Deputy Director**

Frank Congine serves as the Health Services Assistant Deputy Director for the Orange County Health Care Agency, where he oversees the Forensic, Justice-Involved, and Re-Entry Division of Behavioral Health Services. He brings over 15 years of experience across institutional, military, private, and public sector settings, with prior leadership roles in Napa, Santa Barbara, San Diego, and the State of Illinois. Frank has led major initiatives, including CalAIM payment reform, behavioral health integration, and the expansion of forensic and diversion programming across multiple counties. A Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, he holds a Master's in Forensic Psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and an Executive MBA in Strategic Leadership from the University of Tennessee.

**Janene Delmundo, California Correctional Health Care Services, Deputy Director, Special Projects/Programs**

Janene DelMundo has more than 25 years of applied program experience, specializing in project management, information technology, and program administration. Ms. DelMundo is currently serving as the Deputy Director of the Integrated Substances Use Disorder Treatment (ISUDT) Program and Special Projects, and is the Project Director for the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) 1115 Waiver. Ms. DelMundo has been instrumental in coordinating large-scale projects for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the California Correctional Health Care Services, including oversight of the statewide implementation of the Employee Health Records Systems and the Electronic Dental Records System.

**Chris Edens, Chief Deputy Director, CA Dept of State Hospitals**

Chris Edens has been the Chief Deputy Director of Program Services for DSH since 2021. She was previously the Deputy Director for the Forensic Services Division and began her state career with the former Department of Mental Health in 1999, working in partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation, supporting the employment needs of individuals with serious mental illness. During her more than 20 years of service to the department, Ms. Edens has worked in multiple positions focused on the program and fiscal policy issues impacting the state hospital system. She has had the opportunity to lead some of the most significant efforts of the department, including the DSH Diversion Program for pre-trial felony mental health clients and the Jail-Based Competency Treatment Program for felony Incompetent to Stand Trial patients.

**Sarah Eberhardt-Rios, Sutter County Health & Human Services, Director – Paradigm Awardee**

Prior to joining Sutter County in 2018 as the Branch Director overseeing Acute Psychiatric and Forensic Services, Sarah led the Integrated Systems of Care Division at the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), overseeing specialty health programs serving 1 million beneficiaries, including multiple state waivers and California Children's Services. Prior to relocating to Northern California, Sarah spent ten years with the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health in

multiple leadership positions. She is regarded as a subject matter expert in several areas of public behavioral health services, managed care, and health and social services programs. Ms. Eberhardt-Rios obtained her bachelor's degree in Biology from San Francisco State University in 2000 and her Master's degree in Public Administration from California State University, San Bernardino in 2007. She enjoys stream fishing, vintage clothing, good music, and is a super fun gal.

**Hallie Fader-Towe, Director of Justice & Health Initiatives, Behavioral Health, Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center**

Hallie Fader-Towe works with local and state policymakers to craft policies, processes, and programs that bring research-informed approaches to their jurisdictions. In her positions with the CSG Justice Center, she has worked with jurisdictions around the country on collaborative, data-driven planning and implementation efforts to address criminal justice functions from initial detention through reentry, including a focus on people with mental illnesses. She has also managed the development of training materials on mental health courts and on judicial responses to the prevalence of individuals with mental illnesses involved with the criminal justice system. Hallie has worked with state and local partners in California on Stepping Up, implementation of mental health diversion, using local data to inform state policy (Public Health Meets Public Safety), and is currently working on Aligning Health and Safety in California, an effort to support behavioral health transformation for people involved with the criminal justice system. Hallie lives in San Diego. Hallie received a BA from Brown University and a JD from Harvard Law School.

**Dr. Ambar Faizi, Assistant Medical Director, CA Dept of State Hospitals**

Dr. Ambarin Faizi serves as an Assistant Medical Director at the California Department of State Hospitals. In her role as the IST Solutions Psychiatrist, she is currently leading the SMI CalAdviser training and technical assistance initiative and is dedicated to serving a severely mentally ill population across the State, focusing on the delivery of excellent patient care and collaborative approaches to improving patients' quality of life. She is board-certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in Psychiatry with added qualification in Forensic Psychiatry. She completed her forensic psychiatry fellowship training at the University of California, Davis, following general psychiatry residency training at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. She received her Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed her undergraduate studies in Biological Sciences at the University of California, Riverside.

**Marcus Galeste, Research & Evaluation Scientist, Commission for Behavioral Health**

Marcus Galeste has led and supported various research and evaluation projects with the Commission to help create a statewide picture of mental health programs and services in California. Prior to joining the Commission, Marcus held various research roles with the California Board of State and Community Corrections, as well as the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. His professional and academic training has centered on program evaluation and creating research opportunities that inform effective policies in both the mental health and criminal justice realms. Marcus received his Bachelor's and Master of Science degrees in Criminal Justice. He received his PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Arizona State University, where he continues to hold a

position as a Faculty Associate, teaching courses in Program Evaluation as well as Special Topics in Criminology and Criminal Justice.

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

April Giambra, MSW, is the Deputy Director of Clinical Services for Lake County Behavioral Health Services, where she oversees the county’s crisis, adult, and children’s systems of care. She has more than a decade of experience in substance use disorder treatment and mental health services, and has advanced through multiple leadership roles within the department. April’s work has centered on developing Lake County’s Mobile Crisis Response team and expanding innovative approaches that integrate clinical care, community partnerships, and lived experience.

**Brenda Grealish, Executive Director, Commission for Behavioral Health**

Brenda Grealish joined the Commission as executive director in April 2025. With more than 25 years of service in the California state government, Grealish most recently served as Executive Officer for the Council on Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health. Her previous leadership roles include Chief of the Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Division and Acting Deputy Director of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services at the California Department of Health Care Services. Grealish also held leadership positions at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, where she was appointed Deputy Director in 2012.

**Jessica Headley Ternes, Director of Behavioral Health, Third Sector**

Jessica brings more than a decade of experience supporting county-level behavioral health departments in implementing innovative approaches, creating inclusive evaluation designs, centering staff wellness across workforce interventions, and implementing practices to better understand, center, and integrate consumer-centered outcomes. She co-founded the Consumer Evaluation Council in San Bernardino County, a group of Clubhouse consumers whose leadership and work were recently acknowledged with a NaCO award. She has experience working in corrections settings, including jails across Southern California, and nearly a dozen prisons in California. Jessica received her Master’s degree in Policy & Program Evaluation from Claremont Graduate University, and her Bachelor’s degree in Social Marginalization & Policy from Johnston College at the University of Redlands. In her free time, Jessica enjoys visiting her hometown of Joshua Tree, researching her family’s ancestry, and spending time with her family, including her dog Daisy and two cats, Mordecai and Serafina.

**Curtis Howard, Founder, LivEX and Board Member, San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness**

Curtis Howard is a San Diego native and founder of LivEX, a lived experience consultant in the areas of homelessness, gangs, substance use, and justice-impacted policy. Curtis is formerly homeless and formerly incarcerated. During his incarceration, he authored and self-published two books: *Cellmates & Cellouts* (a book of consequences) and *Who’s Left* (an autobiography of struggles). In 2014, Curtis became a member of All of Us or None– a national organization that advocates for formerly incarcerated people and their families. In 2019, Curtis became president of the San Diego chapter. He retired in December 2024 after over 10 years to allow youth leadership and focus on his work with the San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH). RTFH extended him the opportunity as a



consultant to advocate on a more impactful platform around housing and those who are justice-impacted.

**Sarah Hunter, Senior Behavioral Scientist, Director, RAND Center on Housing and Homelessness, and Professor, RAND School for Public Policy**

Dr. Hunter has led the evaluation of a number of housing initiatives in Southern California, including Los Angeles County's Housing for Health and Jail in Reach Pay for Success initiatives. She has also investigated the impact of rapid re-housing programs for probationers in Los Angeles (called Breaking Barriers). She also currently leads RAND's longitudinal enumeration and demographic survey effort (LA LEADS) that provides dynamic information about the unsheltered population in 3 LA neighborhoods: Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice. Her research has been featured in several media outlets, including CNN, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, National Public Radio's "Marketplace," the Christian Science Monitor, LAist, and the Journal of the American Medical Association. Hunter received her B.A. from New York University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

**Elise Jones, Director, Lake County Behavioral Health**

Elise Jones serves as the Director of Lake County Behavioral Health Services, where she leads countywide initiatives that integrate behavioral health and justice systems. She has championed the development of cross-sector partnerships that embed lived experience into care models, including forensic peer support, crisis response, and diversion programming. Elise's leadership emphasizes trauma-informed practice, workforce development, and equitable access to services for rural and frontier populations.

**Veronica Kelley, Orange County Health Care Agency, Director**

Veronica Kelley is the Director of the Orange County Health Care Agency, where she oversees behavioral health, public health, and medical services for one of California's largest counties. With more than 33 years of experience in behavioral health, she has served in leadership roles across multiple counties and is a licensed clinical social worker. Dr. Kelley has championed innovative programs addressing mental health crises, homelessness, and opioid misuse, while also guiding early implementation of statewide initiatives such as CalAIM and the CARE Act. In addition to her county leadership, she serves on numerous statewide boards and committees and teaches social work at Loma Linda University and Cal State Fullerton.

**Ian Kemmer, Orange County Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Director**

Ian Kemmer is the Director of Behavioral Health Services for the County of Orange Health Care Agency. Ian has worked for Orange County in Behavioral Health Services for over 22 years. He has a master's degree in counseling psychology and is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Ian has served in high-level management positions since 2014, working in all the functional areas of Behavioral Health Services, which include Assistant Deputy Director of Adult and Older Adult Mental Health and of Behavioral Health Quality Management. Plus, as a Division Manager over Substance Use Disorder programs, Veterans' Programs, and Crisis and Acute Care Services. In these roles, he worked

on planning and directing the operations of these behavioral health function areas and directing all administrative and financial activities.

**Barry Lindstrom, Vice President of Operations, Amity Foundation**

Mr. Lindstrom currently serves the Amity Foundation and has been working in Teaching and Therapeutic Communities and the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) field for 34 years. Mr. Lindstrom has been a Director and Administrator of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), In-Prison and Reentry non-profit contracted projects for 23 of those years. Barry and his team serve as a state-wide liaison with and between the CDCR and the Specialized Treatment for Optimized Programming (STOP) reentry contractors throughout California, and provide oversight of STOP Area 5 serving State Parolees in Los Angeles County. STOP Area 5 subcontracts with 42 different community-based agencies/businesses at 101 physical locations. Mr. Lindstrom is currently a Licensed Independent Addictions Counselor in Arizona and a Certified Addictions Specialist in California.

**Magnus Lofstrom, Policy Director and Senior Fellow, Public Policy Institute of California**

Magnus' research focuses on crime, policing, racial disparity, recidivism, and the impacts of criminal justice reforms. His areas of expertise also span immigration, education, and entrepreneurship. His research has been published in numerous academic books and journals, including *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Criminology & Public Policy*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Journal of Human Resources*, and *Review of Economics and Statistics*. He serves on the editorial board of *Industrial Relations* and was a member of then-California State Controller John Chiang's Council of Economic Advisors. Prior to joining PPIC, he was a faculty member at the University of Texas at Dallas and the University of California, Irvine. More recently, he has taught at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. He received his PhD in economics from the University of California, San Diego.

**Phuong Luu, Sutter-Yuba Health Officer, Sutter County Public Health**

Dr. Phuong Luu is a board-certified internal medicine physician with a passion for public health, as she believes prevention and health promotion is the key for all to live healthy lives. Prior to joining the Yuba-Sutter region in 2020, she served as the medical director of public health for a small US territory called the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands. The US territory lacked most medical specialists, so in addition to her public health responsibilities, Dr. Luu worked as a primary care provider practicing at the top of her license to care for complex, chronically ill patients. Dr. Luu obtained her medical degree from the University of Washington and completed an internal medicine residency at George Washington University. She also completed a General Internal Medicine Fellowship at Johns Hopkins University and, while there, completed a master of Health Science in Clinical Epidemiology.

**Lahela Mattox, Chief Operations Officer, San Diego Regional Task Force on Homelessness**

Lahela Mattox serves as Chief Operations Officer for the Regional Task Force on Homelessness in San Diego. With more than two decades of experience in behavioral health, housing, homelessness, and poverty programs across California and Hawaii, she is recognized as a systems leader who brings together partners, funding, and innovation to address complex challenges. At RTFH, she oversees



strategic initiatives that advance housing solutions, strengthen data-driven practices, and drive regional collaboration. A respected voice statewide and nationally, Lahela is known for cultivating partnerships, elevating best practices, and championing policies that expand housing access.

**Jim Mayer, Adjunct Professor, McGeorge School of Law – Paradigm Awardee**

Jim Mayer is a practitioner of performance-oriented government and collaborative governance, working across the continuum of public priorities, from sustainable natural resource management to equitable economic development. Jim is an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law's graduate program in public policy and administration, where he teaches courses in systemic change and increasing societal capacity. In 2019 and 2020, Jim was the Chief of Innovation at the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, where he established the state government's first "innovation incubator." He also serves as president emeritus and senior fellow at California Forward. As the founding CEO, Jim advanced bipartisan political and fiscal reforms and worked with state and local agencies to re-engineer programs and services to improve results. During Jim's tenure, California Forward also launched and managed the CA Economic Summit, which worked with the Department of Housing and Community Development and a broad set of stakeholders to produce the "All of the Above" framework for closing the state's 3.5 million home gap. Previously, Jim directed the Little Hoover Commission, a bipartisan state agency that reviews programs and recommends changes to the Governor and the Legislature. Jim managed nearly three dozen in-depth performance reviews of state policies and operations, including health and human services, education, criminal justice, emergency preparedness, and water resources.

For more than a decade, Jim was a daily newspaper reporter and previously served on the California Community College Chancellor's Economic Development Program Advisory Council and the Chancellor's Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy. In 2021, Jim received the National Public Service Award presented by the National Academy of Public Administration and the American Society for Public Administration. He is the 2020 recipient of the Ross Clayton Lifetime Distinguished Public Service Award presented by the Sacramento Chapter of ASPA. He is the 2019 recipient of the California Steward Leader Award. He has a bachelor's in journalism from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo; a master's in public policy from Sacramento State University; and was a mid-career fellow at the University of Michigan. He is a director of the Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. He is a member of the executive committee and chairs the Groundwater Management Task Force for the Northern California Water Association.

**Christa McCauley, Program Manager, Jail Services, Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health**

Christa McCauley serves as a Program Manager for Sutter County, currently overseeing the implementation of the CalAIM Justice Involved (JI) Initiative for the Sutter County Jail. Christa has dedicated a decade of her career to Sutter County, first in employment and eligibility working in Medi-Cal and CalFresh, and then transitioning to Sutter County Public Health in the Health Navigator program. She stepped into her role overseeing the CalAIM JI Initiative in 2024 and helped Sutter implement the program in the second cohort of approved counties to go live by the Department of Health Care Services, utilizing her knowledge of Medi-Cal, stakeholder engagement, and program

management. Christa holds a bachelor's in creative writing and a Master of Fine Arts in English-Creative Writing from Southern New Hampshire University.

### **Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors**

Holly J. Mitchell serves on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, where she brings a deep understanding of the vital safety net LA County provides to millions and a commitment to ensuring that all residents can thrive. Since being elected to the Board of Supervisors in 2020, Supervisor Mitchell has spearheaded the creation of the county's first safe RV parking lot to help address the homelessness crisis, passed a countywide guaranteed income program that includes foster youth, established the first community budget program for unincorporated areas of LA County, created a first-of-its kind program to protect small business owners from displacement, and made LA County the first in the nation to phase out urban oil drilling. A third-generation Angeleno and internationally recognized author of the landmark anti-discrimination law, the CROWN Act, Supervisor Mitchell is honored to represent the two million residents of Los Angeles County's vibrant and diverse Second District – which includes 12 cities and dozens of unincorporated communities spanning from as far north as Park La Brea to Carson in the South Bay and as far west as Manhattan Beach to East Rancho Dominguez.

### **Sara Nakada, Orange County, Public Defender**

Sara Nakada is the Public Defender of Orange County, leading approximately 460 staff, including 240 attorneys, comprising the Office of the Public Defender, Alternate Defender, and Associate Defender of Orange County. The Department strives to advance a more humane and compassionate justice system by protecting the constitutional rights and freedoms of the diverse communities of Orange County through inspired, client-centered advocacy in the courtrooms and the community. Sara began her legal career at the Orange County Public Defender's Office in 2003 as a deputy public defender. She has served the office in various assignments, including dependency, writs and appeals, and complex felony trial litigation. Prior to becoming the Public Defender, Sara served as the Chief Deputy Public Defender, as an executive manager over Special Operations, and supervised the Office's operations at the North Justice Center in Fullerton. She currently serves as a Board Member of the Orange County Bar Association.

### **Michael Rand, Commander, San Diego Sheriff's Office**

Mike Rand began his career with the San Diego Sheriff's Office in 1999 as a corrections deputy. He quickly advanced, becoming a patrol deputy and later an Area Investigator at the Lemon Grove Station. Mike was promoted to Sergeant in 2012, serving in various roles, including the Border Crime Suppression Team and Internal Affairs. He continued to rise through the ranks, becoming a Lieutenant and a Patrol Station Commander before his promotion to Captain in 2021. Currently a Commander in the Detention Services Bureau, Rand has also served for more than 13 years on the Sheriff's Crisis Negotiations Team. Mike holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from San Diego State University and a master's degree in Organizational Leadership from National University. Mike is also a graduate of the Sherman Block Leadership Institute, as well as the 279th session of the FBI National Academy.

### **David Panush, President, California Health Policy Strategies (CalHPS) – Paradigm Awardee**

David's 35 years in state government give him a unique understanding of policy, politics, state budget issues, and the inner workings of the legislative process. As a senior-level executive at Covered California and a veteran legislative consultant to five State Senate Leaders, David knows how the Capitol works and how to be a catalyst for change. As the former External Affairs Director for Covered California, David was part of the core senior leadership team responsible for standing up and launching the California Health Benefit Exchange, which now has more than 1.3 million members. In his role, he provided leadership, strategic guidance, and management of the Exchange's external relationships with elected officials, stakeholders, and state and federal agencies. He was also responsible for legislation and analysis of policy issues that affected the Exchange.

Before joining Covered California, David served in the California State Legislature for more than thirty years. He helped advise five State Senate Presidents Pro Tempore – David Roberti, Bill Lockyer, John Burton, Don Perata, and Darrell Steinberg. In his role as Health Policy Advisor, David served as the lead staff for the State Senate on California's effort to enact comprehensive health reform (2007 and 2008) and played a leadership role in California's landmark Affordable Care Act implementation legislation, which established the "Bridge to Reform" Medi-Cal Waiver and the California Health Benefit Exchange. David served as policy advisor on budget and fiscal issues, particularly in the areas of state and local criminal justice policy, juvenile justice, and health and human services issues. David graduated from UC Berkeley and now lives in Sacramento with his wife, Eve. They have two children, Michael and Jenny. In his spare time, David plays and sings classic rock tunes and some originals with the Sacramento Remedy7 band.

### **Melanie Scott, Asst Deputy Director, CA Dept of State Hospitals**

Dr. Scott has worked with the CA Department of State Hospitals for the last 9 years and is currently an Assistant Deputy Director in the Community Forensic Partnership Division. Dr. Scott is responsible for the oversight of the clinical treatment operations of the forensic programs outside of the State Hospitals, including the Jail-Based Competency Treatment (JBCT) programs, Forensic Conditional Release Programs (CONREP), Early Access and Stabilization Services (EASS), Community-Based Restoration (CBR), Community Inpatient Facilities (CIF), and DSH Diversion. In 2021, Dr. Scott participated in the IST Solutions Workgroup as co-chair for Working Group 1: Early Access to Treatment and Stabilization for Individuals Found Felony IST. Dr. Scott is a forensically trained, licensed psychologist and completed her postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University's Division of Law and Psychiatry. Dr. Scott has more than 15 years of experience in forensic psychology.

### **Dr. Sharmil Shah, Branch Chief, Behavioral Health & Policy, Health Workforce Development, Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI)**

Sharmil Shah, MA, Psy.D., is a child psychologist by training with more than 20 years of experience in clinical care, management, outreach, and policy. She currently serves as the Branch Chief of Behavioral Health and Policy for the Office of Health Workforce Development at the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI). In this role, she leads strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening California's behavioral health workforce and advancing policy solutions to improve care access. Previously, she oversaw statewide programs as Chief of Program Operations

and Innovation at the Commission for Behavioral Health. Her career began in direct service as a child clinician, and she has also served as the Director of the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Riverside County, demonstrating a deep commitment to child and family well-being. Dr. Shah holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of California, Riverside, a Master of Arts in Psychology from Chapman University, and a Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) from California Southern University.

### **Dale Stoebe – Chief of Police, Lakeport Police Department**

Chief Stoebe has served as the Chief of Police in Lakeport, California, since 2024, moving up through the department's ranks for more than 34 years. He has led efforts to strengthen partnerships between police and behavioral health providers, particularly around crisis response and diversion programs. Chief Stoebe is a strong advocate for trauma-informed policing, cross-system collaboration, and ensuring community safety through compassionate, coordinated crisis care.

### **Yvette Verastegui, Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division, Superior Court of Los Angeles County**

Judge Yvette Verastegui is the Supervising Judge of the Criminal Division of the Los Angeles County Superior Court. Prior to her appointment to the bench in 2010, Judge Verastegui served as a Deputy Alternate Public Defender at the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office. She also served as a Deputy Public Defender at the Orange County Public Defender's Office. In 1996, she was named Orange County Public Defender of the Year. Judge Verastegui received her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law and her B.A. from the University of California, Irvine.

### **Kit Wall, Project Director, Words to Deeds**

Kit Wall is a creative and connected government affairs, public policy, and communications leader experienced in designing innovative, collaborative initiatives that bring together key decision-makers to advance public policy in California. Kit held senior government relations roles with Eli Lilly & Company, focusing on local government, including jail diversion specialization across the U.S. In 2003, she initiated the Words to Deeds concept, which has developed into California's renowned interdisciplinary leadership forum and standard best practice for fostering successful and ongoing collaboration across silos and diverse audiences at the intersection of behavioral health and criminal justice. Kit launched Kit Wall Productions in 1996, bringing her expertise from her 40-year career in strategic communications, marketing, public policy, and political campaigns to diverse, multi-sector clients ranging from professional sports to entertainment to nonprofit organizations.

### **Caroline Whistler, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Third Sector**

Caroline Whistler is the co-founder and CEO of Third Sector, a national nonprofit that advises government agencies on improving their policies and services to achieve better outcomes for all people. Under her leadership, the organization has redirected more than \$1.8 billion in public funding toward outcomes-focused solutions for critical social issues like behavioral health, criminal justice reform, housing, and family economic mobility. Third Sector has grown to serve more than 50 state and local government jurisdictions, with a team of 60 remote employees and a \$10 million operating budget. Whistler's work in outcomes-focused contracting has earned her national recognition, including being named to the Chronicle of Philanthropy's "40 Under 40" list in 2016. Her approach is grounded in the belief that leaders must challenge the status quo and incorporate innovative

solutions to effect social change.