



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 5
File #: 24-425

Board Meeting Date: 6/11/2024

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor David J. Canepa, District 5
Supervisor Noelia Corzo, District 2
Subject: Appointments to the Behavioral Health Commission (fka Mental Health and Substance Abuse Recovery Commission)

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation for appointments to the Behavioral Health Commission, each for an initial partial term ending September 30, 2026:

- A) Sidhartha Palani; and
- B) Rubi Garcia; and
- C) Lavanya Poreddy, representing Public member.

BACKGROUND:

The Behavioral Health Commission reviews and evaluates the County's mental health and substance abuse disorders needs, services, facilities and special problems. The Commission advises the Board of Supervisors and the Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Director on any aspect of the local mental health program, reviews and approves procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement at all stages of the planning process and submits an annual report to the Board of Supervisors on the needs and performance of the County's mental health system.

The Commission consists of up to 22 members, 19 of whom are appointed by the Board of Supervisors representing family members, consumers/clients, veterans, professionals and interested residents. With respect to the remaining three members, one shall be a member of the Board of Supervisors, and two shall be members of the County's Youth Commission. By State law, at least 50% of the 19 members appointed by the Board must be consumers or family members of consumers of mental health services.

DISCUSSION:

At the recommendation of the reviewing committee of the Behavioral Health Commission, Sidhartha Palani and Rubi Garcia are being recommended to serve in client seats. Lavanya Poreddy is being recommended for appointment to serve as the Board-appointed Public member.

Sidhartha Palani is a committed community servant and accomplished technology professional with experience in product management leadership at startups and global technology companies. He earned his Bachelor of Science from Duke University and Masers of Business Administration from Harvard Business School. Sidhartha lives with his wife and two sons in Burlingame.

Rubi Garcia grew up in East Palo Alto. She completed an Associate degree in business at Cañada College, and then completed a Bachelor's in Business, with an emphasis in Marketing, at Menlo College. In addition to pursuing an education, Rubi is a mother of five young children, which has given her valuable experience in overcoming many challenges that arise in education, health, and employment. She also supports the success of her peers recovering from mental health and/or substance use challenges by equipping peers with tools, resources, peer support groups, and training to overcome barriers, especially for those in underserved communities in San Mateo County. With her personal lived experience, she dedicates her time to strengthening the community by actively participating in the East Palo Alto Substance Abuse Coalition, Mental Health Initiative, Peer Specialist Support Coalition, San Mateo County Contractors Association, Pride Initiative, Diversity & Equity Initiative, and The Primary School Site Council.

Lavanya Poreddy has a background in engineering and high technology, with a primary focus in building communities, operations, trust and safety and customer success. A leader who puts heart and humanity as the center of her leadership and a professional career spanning almost two decades, Lavanya Poreddy has been an advocate for life. Working for policies around child safety and mental health issues, supporting survivors of domestic violence and working with kids with special needs has been the center of her personal life.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.