

Tri-City Mental Health Services Governing Board

League of Women Voters of Mt. Baldy Area

Observer Report by David V. Estrada

July 2018 to May 2019

Tri-City Mental Health Services is a municipal district Joint Powers Authority (JPA) organized in 1960 by the cities of Pomona, Claremont, and La Verne. Pursuant to the JPA Agreement, Tri-City is governed by a Board of Directors (“Governing Board”) composed of seven members. Members of the board include four city council members selected by their respective City, and three community members appointed by their cities.

Tri-City MHS’s jurisdiction has a population of 225,000 and serves over 10,000 persons a year. With a staff of 200 employees and an annual budget of \$23 million, operations are funded by the Mental Health Services Act, Medi-Cal (Medicaid) and the 1991 Realignment under the Bronson-McCorquodale Act.

The current members of the Governing Board include

1. Robin Carder, Chair, City of La Verne, Council Member
2. Ronald T. Vera, Esq., Vice Chair, City of Claremont, Community Representative
3. Rubio Ramiro Gonzalez, City of Pomona, Council Member
4. Jed Leano, Esq., City of Claremont, Council Member
5. Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, City of Pomona, Council Member
6. Mona Sparks Johnson, City of Pomona, Community Representative
7. Carolyn Cockrell, City of La Verne, Community Representative

Staff in regular attendance:

1. Toni Navarro, Executive Director
2. Diana Acosta, Chief Financial Officer
3. Angela Igrisan, Director of Clinical Program Services
4. Rimmi Hundal, Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services
5. Nancy Gill, Chief Operations and HIPAA Privacy Officer
6. Natalie Majors-Stewart, Chief Compliance Officer
7. Dr. Seeyam Teimoori, Medical Director

Regular meetings of the Tri-City Mental Health Services Governing Board are scheduled at 5:00 P.M. on the third Wednesday of the month at Tri-City’s MHSA Administration Building located at 2001 North Garey Ave., Pomona CA. Meeting agendas, all supporting documents and meeting minutes from the prior month are published in a timely manner and, as a courtesy, are sent directly to my email address. The Board follows appropriate government standards and operates transparently. It welcomes public input and its members are prepared and well engaged. Various administrative staff and front-line workers attend meetings.

Among its many initiatives, Tri-City is a leading partner in addressing the causes and solutions to homelessness in the three cities. Their Intensive Outreach and Engagement Team and Community Navigators reach out to the local homeless shelter to assist those who need mental health services or who are at-risk of chronic homelessness and link them to housing services.

Tri-City is one of the few public mental health agencies in the State of California that consistently has a public stakeholder process with such well attended involvement by the community it serves. In October and November of 2018 Tri-City hosted ten community discussions that engaged 130 participants to explore and build support for solutions which included

- Education through a multi-city communication campaign.
- Engagement of peers in dialog
- Optimizing the use of existing affordable homes
- Developing new homes with innovative models
- Creating new permanent supportive housing

Tri-City is experienced in providing permanent supportive housing through MHSA funding. Permanent supportive housing is permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability achieve housing stability. Supportive services include access to transportation services, employment training, medication assistance and crisis assistance. Studies have shown that supportive housing is effective with 90% of residents remaining housed after a year, at about half the cost of living on the streets. Tri-City's existing Permanent Supportive Housing projects include Parkside Apartments Pomona 62 units, Cedar Springs Apartments La Verne 36 units, Holt Family Apartments Pomona 50 units, Baseline Project Claremont 2 units, and Park Ave Apartments Pomona 8 units.

Tri-City works tirelessly to engage all populations who are mentally ill and may face barriers to services and housing due to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, and familial status. These barriers can create a lack of access and quality of care disparities for these populations. This agency is committed to assist these individuals into the Tri-City system of care and link them with affordable and permanent supportive housing.

I have observed seven of the last nine board meetings since my appointment as an observer by the League of Women Voters in July of 2018. As a past president of the National Alliance for Mental Illness for the Pomona Valley, I am familiar with the operations and services provided by Tri-City MHS and its Governing Board. I am proud to report that this great public services organization continues to deliver the highest quality services and continues to operate in a professional and transparent manner.

League of Women Voters of California Positions on Government:

Tri-City Mental Health Services parallel the LWV position in their support for an adequately funded mental health system that provides comprehensive services for all and places emphasis on meeting the needs of children and the homeless. Emphasis is placed on counseling, job placement, housing, medical treatment and hospitalization (if

needed) and the use of local, county and client committees for evaluation. The Governing Board promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.