Embracing Transformation And Improving Communities For Over 40 Years
Phoenix South Community Mental Health Center was incorporated in 1975 with the mission to provide mental health services to individuals who otherwise would not have access to or knowledge of mental health care. A federally funded agency with ties to St. Luke’s Hospital, Phoenix South offered mental health services to children, youth, families, and adults residing in the community of South Phoenix.


Building on the Strengths of the Community
(1970 - 1984)

Incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

1974-75
Partnership with ASU leads to implementation of Child Development Program in Phoenix Elementary School District, marking the beginning of school-based prevention programs.

1976
Opened Administration, Crisis & Outpatient Complex at 1424 S. 7th Avenue.

1977
First crisis hotline in the Valley created.

1978
Contract secured with Laveen School District.

1979

In September of 1974, Phoenix South Community Mental Health Center entered into a collaborative partnership with Arizona State University which marked the beginning of mental health services in schools. The Child Development Program (CDP), now known as Community Youth Development Program (CYDP), was launched. The program provided basic mental health consultation and education services to children in grades K-8.

In 1985, SBH secured its first school-based mental health and substance abuse prevention contract agreement with the Roosevelt School District. This was the start of the agency’s vision and commitment to provide comprehensive mental health services in schools.

In 2002, Community Services partnered with Arizona Prevention Resource Center and the Dysart Unified School District and was awarded a three-year federally funded Safe Schools Healthy Students grant in the amount of $5.2 million dollars. This award marked the beginning of school-based mental health services. A Program Director was hired and for the first time therapists were part of an interdisciplinary team hired to provide school-based counseling services. Therapists and prevention specialists were assigned to six schools in the Dysart Unified School District.

Today, SBH provides quality, affordable, and accessible mental health/substance abuse services in 60 schools, six school districts, and for over 400 children and families throughout Maricopa County.
Toby 1 - An Early Pioneer

The 1960’s brought significant change in mental health treatment with the onset of de-institutionalization. Many were abruptly released into the community after long-term hospitalization with no resource for self-care and no viable support. Toby House, founded by Toby Citron, was funded and opened in 1973 by the community’s wealthy socialites and volunteers with support from Future McDonald, donations from local business, and the community. There were no public funds and the beginnings of the modern day behavioral health system was in its infancy. Toby’s dream and pioneering work envisioned that people with mental health issues needed a clean supportive home with basic needs being met, healthcare, education, and skill building for successful community transition. SBH acquired Toby House in 2010. Today, 41 years later, the mission is still very much alive. The Toby 1 program still provides a recovery-based supportive stepping stone for persons discharging from mental health hospital settings.

“I remember when . . . there was little hope for an individual diagnosed with serious mental illness . . . when the emphasis was on fixing what’s wrong, rather than building on what’s right.”

Amy Vogelson, Director Community Resilience

Transitional living opened, one of the first community-based, supported SMI housing facilities.

Family Stress Team established.

New logo unveiled.

1980

1981

1982

First mobile crisis team in the Valley established.

1983

Open first Crisis Recovery Unit in Arizona.

1984

First of 6 HUD grants received to provide housing for the seriously mentally ill.

Collaboration with Maricopa County Health Dept. leads to a grant to provide outreach, behavioral health services and healthcare to the homeless.

1st homeless outreach team in Maricopa County implemented.

1985

Contract secured with Roosevelt School District.

1986

1 of 3 agencies selected to receive Title XX funds to provide counseling to victims of sexual abuse who are not served by CPS.

1987

7th Avenue Clinic: Dedication to Community Improvement

The 7th Avenue/Methadone clinic initially began in 1994, working with individuals seeking services for substance abuse treatment. Over the years 7th Avenue Clinic has added US Federal Probation, DUI diversion services and Suboxone services.

We have dedicated nurses, many of whom have been with us for over 15 years. We use state of the art dosing software ensuring accurate dosing of methadone and tracking of random drug screens. Our licensed clinicians provide therapy, both individual and group allowing us to provide individualized treatment.

We utilize the most current methods for drug testing by offering oral swabs. Oral swabs allow staff to drug test individuals while maintaining the individual’s dignity in a hygienic and safe environment.

1st SMI focused homeless outreach program created.

1988

1st SMI focused homeless outreach program created.

1989

1st Maricopa County residential treatment program for homeless veterans developed.

PHOENIX SOUTH LOGO

EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION & IMPROVING COMMUNITIES...
Risk Management: Development and Transformation

SBH has had a long history of proactively managing risk through loss control efforts that preserve resources and monitor safety for service recipients and staff. The development of what is now the Risk Management Department began in 1992 when SBH had less than 200 staff and about 10 vehicles. By 1996, Risk Management was a dedicated department with 1.5 staff. The Safety Committee was revitalized to improve safety-related awareness at program sites and driver training was introduced, reducing the frequency of accidents. Funneling all incident reports through a single department has allowed for organization-wide trending and analysis and freed up direct-line staff from managing ongoing risk-related communication with external stakeholders. Establishing a comprehensive vehicle maintenance program has ensured clean, well-operating vehicles and instituting routine inspections has resulted in program facilities that are in better overall working condition. Early and effective response to incidents has drastically reduced legal expenses and other costs to SBH. Today, Risk Management is a department of eight staff overseeing loss control efforts for SBH’s 103 properties and 68 vehicles.

Acquired SMI Housing from Resolution Trust Corp.

1st intensive outpatient substance abuse program in the state opens to serve pregnant women.

Teen Lifeline received recognition as one of President Bush’s 1000 Points of Light.

Absorbed GM Services, a not-for-profit that provided housing and services for the SMI.

Crisis Mobile Team receives an award from City of Phoenix Fire Department for service excellence.

Substance abuse prevention program in MC Cash School receives Phoenix Cardinals Recognition Award.

Methadone Treatment Program began.

Sold Human Dynamics Institute, a for-profit division of Phoenix South.

“I remember when...Phoenix South Community Mental Health Center landed its first private EAP contract for service with Wells Fargo Banks that was incorporated into a business venture that earned the agency revenue in excess of $4 million dollars when it was sold.”

Ed McClelland, Vice President Community Services
CARF Accreditation: Commitment to Quality Service Delivery

SBH is proud to have been accredited by CARF (a nonprofit accreditor of health and human service programs) for more than 15 years. The accreditation process includes an internal examination of program and business practices as well as a rigorous on-site survey and peer review process. Accreditation opens our service delivery and business processes to outside scrutiny in order to improve the quality of our programs.

Our first CARF accreditation was awarded in 1998. That initial award and all awards since have been Three-Year Accreditations, the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization. A Three-Year Accreditation means that we have demonstrated substantial conformance to CARF standards and an ongoing commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable and of the highest quality.

All of the following SBH programs are currently CARF accredited:

- Crisis Recovery Units
- Day Treatment (CRC)
- Residential Treatment
- Opioid Treatment
- Prevention
- Outpatient Treatment

For more information about the accreditation process, please visit the CARF website at www.carf.org.
Crisis: From Stabilization Units to Recovery Units

Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) began operation in 1995. CSU was a level 2 crisis program with a length of stay of 10-14 days. CSU employed one full-time doctor, Dr. Vimal Abhyanker. Starting in 1999, CSU changed its name to Crisis Recovery Unit (CRU).

CRU served as a level 1 secure facility step-down unit for the Maricopa County Psych Hospital and referrals from the crisis emergency facilities for clients that were not able to be quickly discharged. Many clients remained at CRU for weeks and months until safe and appropriate living situations could be found. CRU2 opened in 2001 as a level 1 sub-acute step-down program.

In 2010, the RBHA made the decision that neither of the CRU units would function as a step-down. This had a positive impact on lengths of stay at the CRUs, allowing the CRUs to serve many more people in the community who needed a place to recover from crisis situations. The current length of stay is around seven days and we serve over 1,200 consumers each year.

Human Resources: Helping Staff to Inspire & Serve

SBH’s commitment to provide high-quality behavioral health services includes a commitment to attracting and retaining skilled, dedicated, and diverse personnel. Our 40 years of transformation have included significant changes in how we recruit, support, and train staff. From managing job postings in the newspaper and processing applications and resumes on paper to adopting online systems that improve efficiency and help us reach more potential applicants, SBH has embraced technology to improve our Human Resources operations. Other uses of technology to support staff have included electronic systems to manage timesheets, training, supervision documentation, and medical/dental enrollment. Many of these applications were developed internally by SBH IT staff and have been essential to managing the many changes SBH has experienced over the years such as the acquisition of Toby House in 2010 that resulted in the addition of 200+ employees. Human Resources has also created targeted, professional development training such as supervisor training and a “BHT Academy” which were created internally to meet the needs of our employees. Over our 40 years, SBH has continually sought out ways to support and retain staff from instituting a retirement plan in 1995 to enrolling in the National Loan Repayment Program in 2010. We remain committed to ensuring that our team of skilled professionals receive the support they need to serve our consumers with the same care and commitment that communities have come to expect over the past 40 years.

“I remember when… I was making copies of resumes, applications and rallying around the weekly deadline to post job announcements in the Arizona Republic.”

Rita Martinez, Vice President Human Resources

2000

- Acquired contract for Rim Guidance Center, a not-for-profit serving Payson and northern Gila County.

2001

- SBH Training Institute expands to community-wide clinical education.

2002

- Mesa Outpatient clinic opens.

2003

- Mental Health Prevention Partnership with Dysart Elementary School District results in Safe Schools Healthy Students Federal grant.

2004

- Broadway Outpatient clinic opens.
EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION & IMPROVING COMMUNITIES...

Seeking Solutions, Creating Change (2002-2014)

Northern Arizona: The Journey Begins

Southwest Behavioral Health Services Northern Arizona opened the first Outpatient clinic in Mohave County in June of 2009. The Bullhead City OP clinic initiated use of an electronic health record (HMS) which was eventually applied to all of SBH’s clinical programs. The steady growth of providing services to communities throughout Northern Arizona continued, and SBH opened additional clinics in Coconino, Mohave, and Yavapai Counties between 2009 and 2011; and in October of 2014 opened the first residential substance abuse treatment center in Mohave County, a ten-bed facility called Marina Pointe. NAZ also operates three Opiate Treatment programs in Flagstaff, Bullhead City, and Prescott Valley. NAZ provides outreach and education to other social service agencies, veteran organizations and business organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis and Soroptomist. Northern Arizona SBH actively educates medical staff, educators, and members of the community to help reduce the stigma of mental health issues and gives favorable recognition to individuals and other organizations that work toward the goal of mental health awareness.

2005
- New SBH Administration building opens.

2006
- Rim/SBH Payson opens Consumer Empowerment Center.
- Became the southwest’s first Families and Schools Together (FAST) training organization.

2007
- Buckeye Outpatient clinic opens.
- Chosen by FAST to spearhead national research on FAST’s positive impact in the southwest region of the US.

2008
- Hosted the 4th international bi-annual Heart and Soul of Change Conference.

2009
- Acquired three apartment complexes for housing SMI.
- Apache Junction and Bullhead City Outpatient clinics open.

7
Outpatient Services: Growth, Expansion, Change

From humble beginnings providing services out of one location in Central Phoenix to seven full-service clinics across the Valley and surrounding areas, the Outpatient Department knows one constant: growth and expansion. The department now serves more than 25,000 persons annually in Maricopa, Gila, and Pinal counties. Expansion has included several moves from smaller, rented locations to the purchase of large, free-standing buildings to accommodate the growth in both staff and persons served. In 2000, the purchase of the Rim Guidance Center in Payson marked the beginning of service expansion into other counties. Due to increased demand for services in the far east and far west valleys, SBH opened clinics in the towns of Apache Junction and Buckeye in order to service persons in more rural areas and to provide greater geographic accessibility overall. In 2012, in order to better accommodate the continual increase in persons seeking services, the Outpatient Department participated in the National Council for Behavioral Health’s Same Day Access Initiative. This quality-improvement initiative involved 53 agencies across eight states and resulted in reduced wait times for services, stronger client engagement, and more positive clinical outcomes.

Service delivery has evolved as well from the early days of traditional medical model approaches to a more strengths-based, person-centered perspective. Today, services emphasize evidence-based approaches aimed at rapid behavior change and improvements in overall well-being. Our treatment professionals consist of experts in cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, behavioral analysis, child and adolescent development, and trauma-informed care.

“I remember when . . . throughout my tenure at SBH, I had the opportunity to provide quality care to over 20,000 people and to help them to change and think positively.”

Dr. Vimal Abhyanker, Psychiatrist (Retired 2014)
Southwest Behavioral Health has evolved and grown over the years by responding to the needs of its growing communities. Initially funded in 1969 by a federal grant, Phoenix South Community Mental Health Center (name changed to Southwest in 1995) was assigned a catchment area in which to provide services. The catchment area was bordered by McDowell on the north, South Mountain on the south, 48th Street on the east, and 35th Avenue on the west. In the early years, funding was predominately by the federal government with additional funding by Maricopa County. Phoenix South was required to provide crisis services, outpatient counseling, and prevention services. In 1977, Phoenix South moved into a newly constructed campus at 1424 South 7th Avenue. We still own and use that property today for outpatient and crisis services.

Times changed and Phoenix South evolved. The 1980s were dominated by two primary issues, with deinstitutionalization of ASH – transition of SMI consumers to community living, and Phoenix’s response to a rapidly growing homeless population. Phoenix South was at the forefront in addressing the community’s needs. In 1980, Phoenix South opened one of the first community living facilities in Phoenix at Roosevelt and 14th Street. The program was called Transitional Living. We provided housing and support services for 16 individuals with serious mental illness. In 1983, Phoenix South opened one of the first community-based crisis recovery programs in the nation. The Crisis Stabilization Unit, located on Roosevelt and 3rd Street, provided residential crisis stabilization services with a capacity to serve six persons. Community-based residential and crisis services quickly expanded throughout the Valley during the 1980s as de-institutionalization continued.

Homelessness in Phoenix became a prominent issue after Time magazine published pictures and a story about homelessness in America that focused on Phoenix, among other cities. The community responded with a strong commitment to improve services and resources for the homeless. Phoenix South contributed through a grant from the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation, to provide the state’s first homeless outreach in 1985. A couple of years later, Phoenix South was awarded the PATH program, a federally funded outreach program that is still operated by SBH and has grown to 13 staff who provide outreach and services throughout the Valley.

In the late 1980s, funding shifted from a combination of federal and county revenue sources to entities, the forefathers to today’s RBHAs. The county grew and so did the number of persons receiving services. Phoenix South no longer served a catchment area, but the entire city of Phoenix.

In the 1990s, primarily due to the Arnold vs. Sarn and Jason K. lawsuits, scope of services expanded greatly for the seriously mentally ill and children. In 1995, Scottsdale-based Community Behavioral Health Services merged with Phoenix South. Now serving the metropolitan area, we changed our name to Southwest Behavioral Health Services (SBH). SBH provided comprehensive services to SMI, adults, and children. SBH also became a large substance abuse residential provider under contract with the Veteran’s Administration. We continued that contract for 12 years.

In the new millennium, changes came at a faster pace. ValueOptions was awarded the RBHA contract, and the service system was redesigned with the creation of provider networks. SBH was the managing partner in the creation of the Southwest Network (SWN) in 2001. Initially housed and heavily supported by SBH, SWN was one of three provider networks for children’s services.

In the summer of 2000, SBH was awarded its first contract outside Maricopa County to provide behavioral health services in Gila and Pinal counties, including Payson. Shortly after the award, RIM Guidance Center in Payson merged with SBH. We became a full-service provider for the Payson region.

In 2009, SBH was awarded a contract to provide services in Mohave, Coconino, and Yavapai Counties. A year later, SBH acquired Toby House, adding more than 150 housing units in Phoenix. Our electronic clinical record HMS began implementation in 2009.

Change is constant; the needs of the communities evolve over time. SBH has responded with services and support for our community members. The future is bright and we must remain prepared to anticipate change and adapt to the needs of our communities.
Community and Financial Strength for the Future

Founded as one of Arizona’s original Community Mental Health Centers 40 years ago, SBH continues to serve children and adults from all over Arizona in its outpatient clinics, the local school districts, inpatient crisis stabilization units, Opioid Replacement Service (ORS) clinics, residential settings, and transitional and permanent housing units. As one of Arizona’s largest and comprehensive non-profit behavioral health services providers, SBH is leading the way in providing innovative and expanded services in all six Arizona counties it serves. In continued commitment to its mission, SBH reinvests in the programs and communities it serves to ensure financial integrity, stability and viability to serve those people in our communities, especially as the system of care transitions into one of integrated physical and behavioral health care.
Mental-health center has broad range of services

The staff members at the Phoenix South Community Mental Health Center serve in over 1000 locations. Some of these are in schools where children having problems in their daily routine are given the tools they need to succeed in life.

The center, like the Phoenix, is a non-profit organization that provides mental health services in the state and national systems. It offers a wide variety of mental health services, including:

- Youth Services
- Crisis Services
- Chronic Illness Services
- Substance Abuse Services
- Mental Health Services

One problem that the center is currently trying to solve is that of drug and alcohol dependence. The center has set a goal of treating 1000 people in the next year, and they have made great strides in achieving this goal. They have helped 800 people so far in the current year.

9 service agencies unite to help needly

Consortium is based on Seventh Avenue

The Arizona Republic, Wednesday, December 9, 1981

Program gives hope to mentally ill

The Phoenix Gazette, Monday, November 1, 1982

7 charities get $15,000 in grants

The Arizona Republic, Tuesday, April 27, 1982

The Arizona Community Foundation has awarded grants totaling $15,000 to seven Valley charities for special projects.

This is particularly important at a time when government support is being withdrawn from many programs.

The Arizona Community Foundation is a measure for the private sector to lend its support in a tax-free manner, the foundation board.

501 Charlie stress program called a success

The Arizona Republic, Tuesday, April 27, 1982

The Phoenix South Community Mental Health Center, 1421 S. Seventh Ave., Phoenix, $2,500 for family counseling.

Sun Sounds, 3124 E. Roosevelt, Phoenix, $5,000 to purchase special-frequency radio receivers for blind people throughout the state.

The Latch School, 1415 N. 27th Ave., Phoenix, $2,000 for special playground equipment.

The Black Youth Recognition Conference of the Arizona Corrections Department, $1,000.

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