
Commissioner Bios

Larry Poaster, Ph.D.
Chair

Bill Brown, Lompoc

Bill Brown was elected as sheriff and coroner for Santa Barbara County in 2006. He had previously served as chief of police for the city of Lompoc from 1995 to 2007, chief of police for the city of Moscow, Idaho from 1992 to 1995. He was a police officer, supervisor and manager for the city of Inglewood Police Department from 1980 to 1992, and a police officer for the city of Pacifica from 1977 to 1980. Prior to his law enforcement career, Sheriff Brown served as a paramedic and emergency medical technician in the Los Angeles area from 1974 to 1977. Commissioner Brown fills the county sheriff seat.

Victor Carrion, M.D., Palo Alto

Victor Carrion, M.D., is an Associate Professor at the Stanford University School of Medicine, and the Director of Stanford's Early Life Stress Research Program. He is a board certified Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, and his sub-specialties include maltreatment, neglect, and post-traumatic stress disorders. Dr. Carrion practices at the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. He is also an Associate Editor for the Journal of Traumatic Stress. His current research focuses on the relationship between brain development and vulnerability to stress, and developing treatments that include individual and community-based interventions for trauma-exposed children and adolescents. Dr. Carrion is also the recipient of awards from the National Institute of Mental Health, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the National Association for Research in Schizophrenia and Affective Disorders, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Dr. Carrion joins the Commission as the Attorney General's designee.

Lou Correa, Santa Ana

Lou Correa was elected to the California State Senate in 2006 and represents the 34th Senate District. He was elected to the Orange County Board of Supervisors in 2004 and prior to that he served in the California State Assembly. He has also served on the Board of the Orange County Community Development Council, the county's Anti-Poverty Council, the California Small Business Board, the Orange County Boy Scouts, and the Orange County Mental Health Board. He is a member of the board of directors

for the Coalition of Orange County Community Clinics. Senator Correa represents the Chairperson of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee or another member of the Senate selected by the President pro Tempore of the Senate.

Mary Hayashi, Hayward

Mary Hayashi was elected to the California State Assembly in November 2006 and represents the 18th Assembly District. Prior to serving in the California State Legislature, Assembly member Hayashi advised the nation's top policy leaders, and established unprecedented partnerships in support of social causes, including access to healthcare, mental health and health education. She served as the Alameda County Coordinator in the campaign to pass Proposition 63. Assembly member Hayashi is the author of Assembly Bill 509, which became the catalyst for the first-ever California State Office of Suicide Prevention. Assembly member Hayashi was recently appointed to serve as an Executive Committee member of The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, which will use public and private sector partnerships to improve research, increase training in the health professions, and implement a national public awareness campaign which will be a key element in advancing and updating the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Assembly member Hayashi represents the Chairperson of the Assembly Health Committee or another member of the Assembly selected by the Speaker of the Assembly.

Ralph Nelson Jr., M.D., Visalia

Ralph Nelson Jr. was a radiologist and a partner of the Kern Radiology Medical Group from 1974 until his retirement in 1999. He also worked as a radiologist at William Beaumont U.S. Army Medical Center from 1973 to 1974. He previously served as President of NAMI California Board of Directors from 2004 to 2008 and was a member of the California Collaborative Justice Court Advisory Committee from 2007 to 2010. He currently serves as a board member of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), is a member of the California State Licensing and Certification Advisory Committee, and is Chair of the Tulare County Mental Health Board. Commissioner Nelson holds a seat as a family member of a child who has or has had a severe mental illness.

David Pating, M.D., San Francisco

David Pating is the Chief of Addiction Medicine and Medical Director of the Chemical Dependency Recovery Program for the San Francisco Kaiser Permanente Medical Center. He also serves as Northern California Regional Chair for Kaiser Permanente's Addiction Medicine Chiefs and Chemical Dependency Quality Improvement Committees. He has an academic appointment as an Assistant Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. He was the President of the California Society of Addiction Medicine, a member of California

Psychiatric Association, California Medical Association, and California Healthcare Association's Behavioral Health Advisory Board, and the California Institute of Mental Health Board. Commissioner Pating fills the seat of a physician specializing in alcohol and drug treatment.

Larry Poaster, Ph.D., Modesto

Larry Poaster is the Commission Chair. He has served as a private consultant to government agencies in the field of health care delivery by public entities since 2002. He previously served as the Director of Behavioral Health Services for the Stanislaus County Department of Behavioral Health Services from 1980 to 2002 and was the Director of Clinical Services for that department from 1970 to 1980. He was President of the California Conference of Mental Health Directors, twice president of the California Mental Health Directors Association, and president of the Board of Directors of the California Institute of Mental Health. Commissioner Poaster fills the seat of a mental health professional.

Andrew Poat, San Diego

Andrew Poat is Vice President, Policy, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation. He previously served as Chief Deputy Director of the California Department of Transportation, Deputy Cabinet Secretary to Governor Pete Wilson, Undersecretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency and Deputy Director of the United States Office of Consumer Affairs. He is a member of the board of directors for LEAD San Diego and the past chair of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee. He is also mentor at Monarch High School in San Diego, a member of the Downtown Rotary and a member of the Public Policy Committee for the San Diego Gay and Lesbian Center. Commissioner Poat is a representative of an employer with more than 500 employees.

Richard Van Horn, Los Angeles

Richard Van Horn is the Commission Vice-Chair. He has been President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mental Health American (MHA) of Los Angeles since 1980 and President Emeritus since his retirement last year. He is a member of the board of the Mental Health Association of California, the California Institute for Mental Health, the California Council Community Mental Health Agencies, and the National Council for Community Behavioral Health (NCCBH). He is a past member of the National Board of Directors of Mental Health America. On behalf of Mental Health America, he has testified before the Congress of the United States regarding issues affecting people with mental illnesses. He also served for six months as principal consultant for the MHSOAC in 2005. Commissioner Van Horn fills the seat of designee of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Eduardo Vega, San Francisco

Eduardo Vega has served as the Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHA-SF) since November 2010. MHA-SF is a non-profit organization that strives to improve the mental health of San Francisco's diverse populations through advocacy, education, research and service. Prior to that, he served as Chief of the Division of Empowerment and Advocacy for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health for over three years. Previously, he served as Associate Director of Project Return, a community support program with the Mental Health Association of Greater Los Angeles, from 2005 to 2007. He was manager for the National Mental Health Consumers Self Help Clearinghouse in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 2003 to 2005. Commissioner Vega has worked in mental health programs and advocacy in five states over 18 years and currently consults with the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline among others. Commissioner Vega fills the seat of a person with lived experience of severe mental illness.

Tina Wooton, Santa Barbara

Tina Wooton has worked as the Consumer Empowerment Manager for Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services of Santa Barbara County since 2009. She worked as the Consumer and Family member liaison for the California State Department of Mental Health from 2005 through 2009, and was staff to the state Mental Health Services Act Implementation Team. She was also the Consumer Liaison for the Mental Health Association / County Mental Health of Sacramento from 1997 through 2005, and a service coordinator for Human Resources Consultants from 1994 through 1997. She has worked full time in the mental health system for 17 years and has presented and advocated for the employment of consumers and family members at the local, state and federal level throughout her career. She has also sat on several statewide committees. Her hobbies include reading and she is also a member of the Junior League of Santa Barbara. Commissioner Wooton fills the seat of a person with lived experience of severe mental illness.