



COUNTY OF ORANGE

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Veronica Kelley, DSW, MSW, LCSW Promoted to OC Health Care Agency Director

Santa Ana, Calif. (March 22, 2024) –Dr. Veronica Kelley, has been selected as the new Director of the OC Health Care Agency (HCA), effective March 22, 2024.

Dr. Kelley has served as the Chief of HCA’s Behavioral Health Services division since December of 2021 and holds a doctorate and a master’s degree in social work. Since joining the HCA, she successfully reorganized the department to help prepare Orange County for the myriad of behavioral health changes on the horizon. This includes preparation and advocacy for significant changes to Medi-Cal via CalAIM which allows for more services to be delivered to those in need. She helped collaboration with local law enforcement partners to divert mental health and homeless calls from 911, and successfully launch a new mobile crisis response. She supported early adoption of the State’s Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act initiative in Orange County, a civil process seeking to serve individuals with untreated schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders.

Additionally, Dr. Kelley has championed multiple efforts in the battle against opioid misuse, launching ongoing educational public townhalls, initiating hard-hitting marketing campaigns to educate diverse families and communities, expanding the distribution of life-saving overdose reversal treatments (naloxone), and being the first county in the state to bring the latest, more potent reversal treatment brand, Kloxxado.

“The County of Orange and I are very excited that Dr. Kelley will be stepping into the Director role at the HCA,” said Frank Kim, CEO. “Dr. Kelley has demonstrated tremendous leadership strength in her role as Chief of Behavioral Health Services and navigated extraordinary transitional times in the mental health and recovery care landscape.”

Dr. Kelley has more than 33 years’ experience in the field of behavioral health and has been a licensed clinical social worker for nearly 25 years. Dr. Kelley began her career with the HCA in 1999, where she started the Office of Cultural Competency & Multiethnic Services in Behavioral Health and then transitioned to San Bernardino County, where she spent 13 years with the Department of Behavioral Health and was appointed the Behavioral Health Director for six years. During her tenure, she led the county's crisis response and recovery efforts to the 2015 Terrorist Attack.

Dr. Kelley remains active at the state level, addressing behavioral health issues as a Board Member of NAMI California and as a Past President of the County Behavioral Health Directors Association. She co-chairs the Substance Abuse, Prevention and Treatment Committee and holds numerous positions on statewide committees, including an appointment to the Governor's No Place Like Home Advisory Board.



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In addition to her leadership roles, Dr. Kelley is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the Loma Linda School of Social Work and Social Ecology and a part time lecturer at California State Fullerton in the Social Work Department.

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