

Via Positiva Center for Behavioral Health Innovation Names Former SAMHSA Region 7 Administrator Kim Freese as CEO

CBHI Will Provide Behavioral Health Providers and Delivery Systems Navigate Current Funding & Behavioral Health Service Delivery Realities

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“

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*Leonard Kincaid, MBA, LPC,
LCDC*

Behavioral Health Consulting and Sustainability Company, today announced the opening of the [Center for Behavioral Health Innovation](#) (CBHI, A Texas Limited Liability Corporation) under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Kimberly Freese, MPA, LAC, CPS to address the urgent uncertainties unfolding within behavioral health right now. “We are so fortunate to have a person of Kim’s leadership and operational knowledge in our field to lead our national strategic innovative growth and service efforts with the changes happening now. Kim and our team provide expert fiscal and operational navigation, help quantify value and negotiate contracts with both traditional and new funders in an atmosphere of courage,

hope, solution, and adaptive capacity. Providers and delivery systems should be developing alternatives and pivot points right now to multiple possible funding scenarios, said [Jim Clarkson](#), President of Via Positiva. “In this uncertain time, we seek courageous, proactive, and solution-focused leaders to join with us, those whose lives teach, mirror, and model a deeply relational approach in ensuring compassionate and culturally responsive mental health and substance use disorder services are readily available and that work—while also wanting to be highly proficient in the fiscal, data-oriented, outcomes driven parts of their companies. Kim Freese is a rare person with these abilities, guiding and teaching others accordingly. She brings a proven large scale track record of managing large systems, acumen for forecasting multi-scenario budgets and managing costs. It was our intention to find an enthusiastic, energetic, heart-centered, highly skilled and very data-savvy person for this position, and in my view, that is exactly who we have found. I am deeply grateful and incredibly enthused that Kim has joined our team after ten transformational years as SAMHSA’s Region Seven Administrator. She lives recovery and innovation with a deep knowledge of the business of behavioral health”, said Clarkson.

Kim is surrounded by an unparalleled team of national trauma informed experts to address every pain, challenge, and pivot point that providers and provider systems face right now in this quickly changing environment:

Clarence Jordan, MBA, National Executive, Peer Support Specialist Services Industry Pioneer and Expert. Leonard Kincaid, LCDR, LPCC, MBA, CEO, Houston Recovery Center, Recovery and Chronic Disease Management. Rick Goscha, PhD, Founder, Co-author, "Strengths Model Care Management". Jim Clarkson, MA, LADAC, Corporate CEO, National Insurance Executive, MAT Expert, Value-based and Evolving Funding Models, Financing, Value Identification, Diversification and Contract Negotiation. Sylvia Barela, MBA, Treatment Provider CEO, Program Management and Fiscal Positioning and Growth. Kris Ericson, PhD, Public Sector Systems Development and National Policy Expert. Reverend Brendalyn Batchelor, LMHP, Business and Spirituality and Spirituality as a Social Determinant of Health. Tommy Valdez, Chairperson for Certification for Trauma Informed Principles and Practices and national industry funding experts John Tadich, MBA, former CEO of United Behavioral Health along with Sam Donaldson, Ph.D., former CEO of Cenpatco.



CEO Kim Freese, MPA, LAC, CPS

Kim Freese began her career providing direct care in women's and children's residential programs, eventually taking on executive leadership roles in correctional, residential, and outpatient behavioral health settings. Her leadership journey continued in state government, where she played a pivotal role in shaping Medicaid policy as the Behavioral Health Medicaid Coordinator for Kansas. Ultimately as the Director of Managed Care, she helped develop and lead major initiatives, including a 1915(b)/(c) managed care waiver, a statewide integrated managed care model under an 1115 demonstration waiver and later Health Homes for those with serious mental illness and other chronic conditions.

Kim served as the Region 7 Director for the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) from 2015 to 2025, working across Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and nine tribal nations. There, she helped advance behavioral health systems through collaboration, innovation, and federal leadership. Kim loves system level work.

Kim holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a master's in public administration from the University of Kansas. She is a Licensed Addictions Counselor, a Certified Peer Support Specialist, and a person thriving in long-term recovery, something she brings to her work with both humility and purpose. She's also a mentor at heart, known for building strong teams and lifting others up.

Leonard Kincaid, Senior Advisor at CBHI and CEO of Houston Recovery Center points out, "We currently have at our fingertips, the clinical, operational, recovery, and chronic disease management and informational technology to effectively address substance use and mental health disorders for long-term wellness and recovery when the system is arranged, deployed, and coordinated correctly. It reduces costs and saves lives. Perhaps the new funding realities will awaken all of us to the solutions that are already working and bring more common sense into the mental health and substance use disorder delivery systems in the country. I love helping providers and systems do what we have done in Houston and what Via Positiva has done in many communities across the country. The results and supporting data speak for themselves. This is what CBHI is all about".

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