

Lopez, Maria [COB]

From: Melissa Contreras <melissa@ah-ri.org>
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2026 6:52 PM
To: COB_Response
Subject: OC BOS Meeting 6/9/2026 Agenda Item 11

Attention: This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Dear Orange County Board of Supervisors,

My name is Melissa, and I am a resident of Anaheim in District 2 and a Community Organizer with AHRI for Justice. Our organization is a proud member of the Abundant Community Transformations Coalition, also known as ACT.

ACT seeks to create multi-generational strength and collective care, empowering working-class AA and NHPI communities in Orange County.

Health and Mental Health Services are deeply important to me because I have spent much of my life supporting my mother, who lives with a serious mental illness. Through that experience, I have seen firsthand what happens when people receive the care they need—and what happens when they do not.

Supporting a loved one with mental health needs is never a one-person responsibility. It requires collaboration between healthcare providers, county services, community-based organizations, supportive programs like IHSS, and family members. When these systems work together, people can live with stability, dignity, and hope.

My mother's life has taught me this lesson. There have been times when she experienced what I call a **continuum of care**—years when services, support, and treatment were available and accessible. During one of those periods, my mother went six years without being hospitalized. Six years of stability. Six years of dignity. Six years of being able to live her life in community.

But when services are underfunded, agencies are understaffed, workers are underpaid, and families cannot access the support they need, that continuum breaks. What follows is often a crisis. Hospitalizations return. Families are stretched beyond their limits. Communities bear the consequences.

The cost of underfunding mental health services is not measured only in dollars. It is measured in psychiatric holds, disrupted lives, caregiver burnout, and preventable suffering.

As federal budget cuts threaten access and affordability to healthcare systems, I ask you: How will the Orange County Board of Supervisors protect families who are losing access to healthcare, dental care, and mental health services?

Will you allow unmet needs to grow into crises, or will you invest in the programs and CBO's that keep people healthy, housed, and supported before they reach a breaking point?

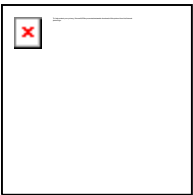
I am asking you to collaborate with CBOs who are trusted members of the community to develop actionable steps in supporting and protecting community members' needs. Together, we can develop a community centered budget that strengthens the safety net for those who need it most.

A change in the federal or county budget should never be the reason someone experiences a psychiatric hold. It should never be the reason a person lives with unbearable dental pain because they cannot access care. It should never be the reason a child is traumatized by watching a parent or family member struggle and suffer due to lack of healthcare access.

You have the responsibility and the opportunity to protect the most vulnerable residents in your district. I ask that you listen to the needs of your community, invest in care before crisis, and ensure that every Orange County resident can access the dignity, stability, and support they deserve.

Thank you.

Warm Regards,



Melissa C.
Community Organizer
She/her/hers
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"paving new pathways to collective justice"