

#### Are you in crisis?

Butte County Behavioral Health offers the following during the coronavirus emergency:

- Assessments by phone at 891-2810, BCBH's Crisis & Access Line (call 911 for life-threatening emergencies).

- Inpatient services with daytime family visits by phone at 891-2775.

- Peer support online or by phone week-days via Zoom

Visit [buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth](http://buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth) for more information.

times people are smoking when I'm talking to them. I had someone chewing tobacco when I was talking to them."

As a result, he says that body language—a key component of communication—may get lost.

The technology shift has yielded an unexpected benefit for Behavioral Health, however. With support groups unable to convene, peer counselors created online meetings. Kennelly said the effort has been so successful, drawing participants from other counties as well as Butte, that the department plans to continue online peer support post-coronavirus.

Telemedicine, too, has been a boon: "We've had clients who historically have had a problem getting to appointments face-to-face," Kennelly said, due to issues such as transportation or childcare, "but they can log in at home at an agreed-upon time and see their counselor."

These new modes will prove significant as Behavioral Health braces for financial hits. Kennelly says the department will suffer a \$5.5 million cut under the proposed state budget. Since that money draws federal matching funds, the total loss is \$11 million, almost 14 percent of Behavioral Health's \$80 million budget.

"Where we're at right now is we're shifting," Kennelly said. "We're beginning to reopen our doors for scheduled appointments, but with a lot of safety precautions in place. We think we'll have a combination [of in-person and online now]."

"Our role [in July]," he added, "is to really start talking about how we will be in our physical building and come on in if you need some help. Things we'll be different—we'll be wearing masks and we'll be social distancing—but we definitely will be back up for business." □

To the following incredibly selfless individuals who stepped up to support independent journalism online when we suspended our print publication in March, we cannot say **THANK YOU** enough.

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