



Mental Health Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR  
March 24, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Mental Health Commission  
 Submitted by: Ajay Krishnan, Chairperson, Mental Health Commission  
 Subject: Reappointment of Edward Opton to the Mental Health Commission

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution approving the re-appointment of Edward Opton as a representative of the general public interest category, for his second term ending January 21, 2026, and to start his third term beginning March 25, 2026, to March 24, 2029.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Mental Health Commission is authorized to be composed of thirteen members. However, there are presently five vacancies on the Commission. These vacancies impair the Commission's ability to adequately review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs.

Approval of the recommended action will keep one position filled and allow the Commission to move one step closer to having a full complement of commissioners to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs.

BACKGROUND

California state law requires that appointments to the Mental Health Commission meet specific categories, who may serve up to nine years consecutively. The general public interest category may include anyone who has an interest in and some knowledge of mental health services. The special public interest category includes direct consumers of public mental health services and family members of consumers, which together must constitute at least fifty percent, or seven seats, of all the commission seats. Direct consumers and family members shall each constitute at least 20% of the commission membership.

The Mental Health Commission recommends Edward Opton for the General Public Interest seat. Mr. Opton is a retired attorney and has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and has volunteered at the National Center for Youth Law to improve mental health

treatment for children in foster care. Mr. Opton has also been active in the community working on numerous issues that affect the community.

Mr. Opton has served on the Mental Health Commission for 6 years. One of his focuses has been people living with mental illness and substance use issues and disorders and the intersection with law enforcement, the criminal legal system, and incarceration systems in Berkeley and Alameda County, as well as non-police crisis response to serving people in crisis in the community. In addition, he has focused on diversion of people with mental illness and substance use issues and disorders away from policing and further avoiding involuntary commitment and transfer to the county psychiatric hospital or criminal legal involvement and incarceration at the county jail.

On January 22, 2026, the Mental Health Commission passed the following motion:

Discussion and Vote to re-appoint Commissioner Edward Opton for his 3<sup>rd</sup> term.

M/S/C (Sol, Teague) Move that we vote Commissioner Edward Opton to be re-appointed for a 3<sup>rd</sup> term

PASSED

Ayes: Fontana-Narell, Hunt, Krishnan, Sol, Teague, Tregub, Turner Noes: None;  
Abstentions: None; Absent: Gu

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the recommended action will allow the Mental Health Commission to move one step closer to having a full and complement of commissioners to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

#### CITY MANAGER

The City Manager concurs with the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Jamie Works-Wright, Commission Secretary, (510) 981-7721

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RE-APPOINTMENT OF EDWARD OPTON TO THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

WHEREAS, membership of the Mental Health Commission is composed of thirteen appointments by the City Council as a whole, including one appointment by the mayor (*or designee*), six special public interest appointments, and four general public interest appointments; and

WHEREAS, with the incoming implementation of the Behavioral Health Services Act, the City of Berkeley will need to have a full complement of diverse appointees to the Commission to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs and to fulfill its mandate; and

WHEREAS, the Mental Health Commission, at its January 22, 2026, meeting recommended the re-appointment of Edward Opton to the Mental Health Commission.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council re-appoint Edward Opton as a representative of the general public interest category, for his 2<sup>nd</sup> term ending January 21, 2026, and his third term beginning March 25, 2026, ending March 24, 2029.

