



# County of San Diego

**CAROLINE SMITH**  
INTERIM DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES  
3255 CAMINO DEL RIO SOUTH, MAIL STOP P-531  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92108-3806  
(619) 563-2700 • FAX (619) 563-2705

**LUKE BERGMANN, Ph.D.**  
DIRECTOR, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

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TO: Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

FROM: Luke Bergmann, Ph.D., Director, Behavioral Health Services

## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (BHS) DIRECTOR'S REPORT – October 2024**

### **SENATE BILL (SB) 43 IMPLEMENTATION AND CARE ACT UPDATES**

#### **SB 43 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES**

SB 43 makes changes to the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act, a California law governing involuntary detention, treatment, and conservatorship of people with behavioral health conditions. SB 43 expands the criteria by which people may be civilly detained under the LPS Act by augmenting the definition of "gravely disabled" to include a severe substance use disorder (SUD), or a co-occurring mental health disorder and a severe SUD, and those unable to provide for their basic needs of access to medical care or personal safety. SB 43 was signed into law by Governor Newsom in October 2023, and will be implemented starting January 1, 2025, per a resolution adopted by the County Board of Supervisors (Board). For more information, please visit the BHS SB 43 Webpage at the following link: [sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/senate\\_bill\\_43](https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/senate_bill_43)

In January 2024, the County began a multi-sector planning group to support rapid SB 43 implementation, focusing on the following four areas: 1) Education and training; 2) Expanding SUD treatment, services, and supports; 3) Establishing alternatives to emergency departments for 5150 holds; and 4) Updating procedures and adding capacity for the Office of the Public Conservator. Notably, on February 27, 2024, the Board approved \$15 million in bridge funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Evergreen to support SB 43 implementation.

Below is a summary of progress within each of the four (4) focus areas:

#### 1. Education and training

- Updated LPS training content to align with new legal definition of grave disability under SB 43. The updated training was administered to roughly 150 individuals from law enforcement agencies, 100 individuals from LPS-designated facilities, and 200 individuals from non-LPS designated facilities
- Launched a comprehensive BHS SB 43 Webpage at the following link: [sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/senate\\_bill\\_43](https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/senate_bill_43)

- Hosted 9 collaborative workgroup sessions and subcommittees with stakeholders from various disciplines such as law enforcement agencies, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), hospital systems, individuals with lived experience
2. Expanding SUD treatment, services, and supports
    - Planning continues to establish the Substance Use Residential and Treatment Services (SURTS) facility in the South Region, which is anticipated to include approximately 70 new beds for residential treatment, withdrawal management (detox), and recuperative care beds.
    - Secured \$12.4M of Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Round 3 grant funds, which includes funding for facility improvements and services for approximately 48 new recuperative care beds countywide. A portion of the grant funding will be utilized for facility improvements and recuperative care beds within the SURTS facility
    - Engaged hospitals to establish locked SUD treatment and chemical dependency recovery services
    - Launching San Diego (SD) Relay in October 2024 to provide behavioral health support in emergency departments for substance use-related needs, including non-fatal overdoses and involuntary holds
    - Modeling for Optimal Care Pathway 2.0 is underway to guide SUD system capacity planning and emergency department SUD care coordination, including hospital incentive models
  3. Establishing alternatives to emergency departments for 5150 holds
    - Broke ground on the new East Region Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) facility in July 2024, expanding CSU coverage to all regions
    - Developed new acute care coordination incentive strategy
    - Conducted operational meetings with CSU providers to implement SUD service delivery and care coordination into CSU settings
  4. Updating procedures and adding capacity for the Office of the Public Conservator
    - Implemented new Public Conservator (PC) data collection case tracker
    - Completed new staffing model and referral estimates
    - Updated PC referral process to include SB 43-related involuntary treatment

## **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE, RECOVERY, AND EMPOWERMENT (CARE) ACT UPDATES**

### **Overview**

The Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act program launched on October 1, 2023. In collaboration with County and community partners, the CARE Act program creates a new pathway to deliver mental health and substance use services to individuals who are diagnosed with schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders and not engaged in treatment. Additionally, a goal of the CARE Act program is to forge upstream diversion from more restrictive settings for those who suffer from a psychotic disorder. Families, clinicians, first responders, and others may begin the process by filing a petition with the civil court to connect people (ages 18+) to court-ordered voluntary treatment if they meet criteria and would benefit from the program. For information on the CARE Act and process, please visit the BHS CARE Act Program webpage at the following link: [sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/senate\\_bill\\_43](https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/senate_bill_43)

## **Integration of CARE Housing Locator Program in Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) Contract**

The Independent Living Association (ILA) and Recovery Residence Association (RRA) contract consists of three key components: ILA, RRA, and the Community Assistance Recovery Empowerment (CARE) Housing Locator Program. The ILA and RRA are membership-based associations comprised of shared housing providers. These associations enforce high standards of quality for the housing offered by their members. Importantly, ILA and RRA member homes do not provide care or supervision but serve as shared housing options for individuals with behavioral health or substance use needs.

Operators offering shared housing to behavioral health clients are subject to rigorous requirements including initial and ongoing training. Operators also undergo both annually scheduled and unannounced inspections to ensure compliance with the quality standards established by the ILA and RRA. These standards are designed to guarantee that tenants reside in safe and healthy environments that support their recovery and personal growth.

ILA and RRA homes offer single beds in shared rooms. ILA homes typically provide meals while RRA homes generally leave meal preparation and grocery shopping to the tenants. Both ILA and RRA homes offer low-barrier housing, meaning they do not require credit, background checks, or verifiable rental histories. Most homes also do not require security deposits, making it more accessible for individuals with limited financial resources to secure housing. Additionally, ILA and RRA homes can function as either transitional or permanent housing. This flexibility allows individuals awaiting permanent supportive housing to maintain shelter without losing their homeless status. Those who prefer communal living as a long-term option can find a permanent residence in these homes. As of June 2024, there are 674 ILA beds and 710 RRA beds available to BHS clients.

In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the ILA/RRA contract was amended to include the CARE Housing Locator Program. This program actively seeks new housing opportunities to expand housing inventory for CARE participants and other behavioral health clients. As a result, further addressing the critical need for supportive housing in the community. As of August 2024, 609 beds were identified in the community for potential CARE participant use.

## **CARE Short-Term Bridge Housing (STBH)**

The CARE process involves several key steps: Referral, Initial Determination, Investigation and Engagement, Development of a CARE Plan, and Connection to Services. This structured approach is designed to identify individuals in need, engage them in care, and connect them with appropriate treatment and support.

The CARE STBH program plays a critical role within the CARE process by providing temporary housing to individuals as they move through the CARE system. STBH providers are member homes of the ILA which are contracted directly with the County of San Diego to offer housing, meals, and stability while individuals await behavioral health services. During this transition period, clients receive clinical support from a CARE case manager, ensuring that their health and wellness needs are addressed.

Importantly, the STBH program does not require payment from clients during their stay, making it an accessible option for individuals with limited financial resources. February 2024 through August 2024, 22 individuals were referred to the STBH program.

## **One Year Program Recap**

During the first year of the CARE Act program launch, the County of San Diego made significant strides. As of September 2024, the BHS CARE Team received 175 petitions. 57 participants were

successfully engaged in behavioral health services under a court adopted CARE Agreement. Notably, within less than 12 months, 2 participants graduated from the CARE program.

Within a year of implementation, the County of San Diego has become a leader in the State for successfully enrolling individuals into the CARE program by utilizing a highly person-centered approach to empowering participants with needs for individualized behavioral health services. Individualized support has improved access to ongoing behavioral health care, housing, medical services, and social benefits, while reducing reliance on emergency services and more restrictive forms of treatment.

In terms of evaluation, BHS hosted two CARE Act convenings with key CARE Act stakeholders, County Staff, and Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) representatives. Discussion for the roundtable meetings, held in March and May of 2024, was informed by participating BHAB members and structured thematically to identify challenges and opportunities for program improvements. BHAB members, stakeholders, and BHS discussed a variety of program implementation topics such as clinical trainings, community engagement strategies, case management and respondent data, as well as efforts to ensure accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## **BHS SPECIAL EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

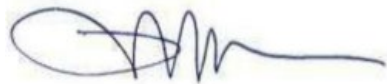
### **Check Your Mood Day**

BHS invites you to participate in Check Your Mood Day! Check Your Mood Day, on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, coincides with National Depression Screening Day. This annual event aims to engage San Diegans in monitoring their emotional well-being not only during October's Mental Illness Awareness week, but throughout the year, as mental health checkups, including depression screenings, should be a regular and integral part of overall healthcare.

Join other community members throughout San Diego County to access mental health resources, complete the online Check Your Mood screening, and take part in the social media campaign to promote mental health awareness!

For more information on Check Your Mood Day please visit the *Live Well San Diego* Check Your Mood Webpage at the following link: <https://www.livewellsd.org/events/check-your-mood>

Respectfully submitted,



LUKE BERGMANN, Ph.D., Director  
Behavioral Health Services

cgt:Caroline Smith, Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Aurora Kiviat Nudd, Assistant Director and Chief Operations Officer  
Cecily Thornton-Stearns, Assistant Director and Chief Program Officer  
Nadia Privara Brahms, Assistant Director, Chief Strategy and Finance Officer