



**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD (BHAB)
ACTION ITEM MAY 4, 2023**

APPROVE THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT INNOVATION PUBLIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM PROPOSAL AND AUTHORIZE SUBMISSION TO THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION, ISSUE COMPETITIVE SOLICITATIONS AND AWARD CONTRACTS, AND EXPLORE PARTNERSHIPS TO SUSTAIN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM

Under the leadership of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board), the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) continues making strides to advance the transformation of the behavioral health system to a system of regionally distributed services that are accessible to all individuals and families in need. The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) is a critical resource that provides dedicated ongoing funding to counties to support prevention, early intervention, and treatment services, along with funding for information technology and workforce development and training. MHSA-funded programs serve children, youth, and families, transition age youth, adults, and older adults who are experiencing serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance, with an emphasis on services accessible to unserved and underserved populations and care that is responsive to cultural and linguistic needs. The MHSA is comprised of five components: Community Services and Supports; Prevention and Early Intervention; Innovation; Workforce Education and Training; and Capital Facilities and Technological Needs.

To address the significant behavioral health workforce challenges that have impacted the region, BHS is proposing a new MHSA Innovation program that would be a first-of-its-kind *Public Behavioral Health Workforce Development and Retention Program* that aligns with several of the strategies outlined in the *Addressing San Diego's Behavioral Health Worker Shortage* report published in August 2022. The proposed Innovation program will offer three new distinct components, including: (a) Outcomes-Based Renewable Training and Tuition Fund, (b) Upskilling to Meet Professional Needs, and (c) Tiered Loan Forgiveness and Home Ownership Incentive. These new approaches will be evaluated for their effectiveness as stand-alone programs as well as their additive benefit when combined with traditional practices.

This action requests the Board approve the MHSA Innovation Public Behavioral Health Workforce Development and Retention Program proposal and following the required 30-day public comment period, submit the Innovation proposal to the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) for approval. Additionally, this action requests the Board authorize competitive solicitations to implement the MHSA Innovation Public Behavioral Health Workforce Development and Retention Program, contingent on approval by the MHSOAC. Finally, this action requests the Board to authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency or designee to explore partnerships and other opportunities to leverage additional funding and resources to sustain the proposed program.

This action supports the County of San Diego's vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future

for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by creating an innovative program to address an unmet need within the San Diego County region by recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse public behavioral health workforce.

It is, THEREFORE, staff's recommendation that BHAB supports the approvals and authorizations needed to implement the above recommendation.