



# County of San Diego

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TO: The Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB)

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

## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTORS REPORT – JANUARY 2021**

### **ACTION ITEM: PROCUREMENT OMNIBUS BOARD LETTER**

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department provides a comprehensive array of community-based mental health and substance use disorder services through contracts with local public and private agencies to vulnerable populations, including individuals who are experiencing homelessness, individuals with justice involvement, and children and youth with complex behavioral health conditions. In pursuit of these initiatives, the Board previously approved the procurement of these critical services.

As the County continues to evaluate and address the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), BHS remains focused on maintaining continuity of critical mental health and substance use disorder services to the most vulnerable individuals and families within the community. Approval of these recommended actions authorizes competitive solicitations and amendments to extend existing behavioral health services contracts, including single source contracts, to sustain critical behavioral health services. This action will also authorize a revenue agreement with the State of California, Department of Rehabilitation for mental health employment services. This action also authorizes the ratification of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 Performance Contract Agreement with the California Department of Health Care Services to provide public mental health services throughout the county. These recommended actions support the continuation of critical work to advance the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care in alignment with Board direction. These actions for services are as follows:

Competitive Solicitations for:

- a. Clubhouse Services
- b. Housing Support Services
- c. Assisted Outpatient Treatment Outreach and Evaluation Services
- d. Outpatient Mental Health Services for Adults

- e. Outpatient Mental Health Services for Children and Youth
  - i. Behavioral Crisis Center and Mobile Assessment Team Services
  - ii. Mental Health Developmental Evaluation Services
- f. Onsite Care Coordination and Case Management Services
- g. Homeless Outreach Worker Services

Extensions for:

Contracts that will be extended up to June 30, 2022 with a 6-month option to extend if needed, as listed in Attachment A of the Board Letter;

Authorization of a Revenue Agreement with the:

State of California, Department of Rehabilitation for Employment Services Program; and

Ratification of Performance Contract Agreement with the:

California, Department of Health Care Services for public mental health services.

**It is THEREFORE, staff's recommendation that your Board vote to support the authorizations and approvals needed to advance the recommendations in this Board Letter.**

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEM: HARM REDUCTION RESPONSE TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Only approximately 10 percent of those with substance use disorder (SUD) access care for their addictions and while the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency has improved accessibility of traditional treatment through implementation of the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System, we know that many people are living with untreated SUD today and that this is related to significant social hardship as well as mental and physical health risk. The COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the need, and engaging individuals struggling with SUD through low barrier strategies is more important than ever.

On March 10, 2020 (03), Supervisor Fletcher brought forward a Board Letter that revisited harm reduction strategies, pointed to the benefits of syringe services programs (SSPs), and provided background on the 1997 San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) Resolution which opposes SSPs, with a recommendation to update this position. Ultimately, the Board voted to approve a recommendation to establish a subcommittee who were directed to meet with staff, stakeholders, and professionals in the field to conduct a needs assessment prior to the establishment of an SSP; develop evaluation tools; and conduct careful planning of the operational tasks. The BHAB meeting on January 7, 2021, will provide an update on this direction and opportunity for discussion.

## ***LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO UPDATES / SPECIAL EVENTS***

### **2020 Live Well Advance Virtual Conference**

The fifth annual Live Well Advance was held for the first time virtually on December 3, 2020. Nearly 2,000 local and national community leaders participated in this year's conference which

hosted nearly 40 breakout sessions, 75 speakers, and over 20 Connection Hub exhibitors. Among the many session topics covered were equity and social justice, climate change, workplace wellness, personal wellness, public health equity, and COVID-19. Session recordings are available on the *Live Well San Diego* YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8v-aJkdtO-RbSRUDsHqo\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8v-aJkdtO-RbSRUDsHqo_Q).

## **UPDATE FROM THE CLINICAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (CDO)**

### **Primary Care Integration Programs - Updates**

The following updates on Primary Care Integration Programs are provided by the BHS Clinical Director's Office and represent updates since the last report out on these programs to BHAB, including updates related to COVID-19.

- The Vista Hill SmartCare Behavioral Health Consultation Service (BHCS) offers psychiatric consultation services to primary care providers via telehealth, as well as behavioral health referral linkages to community-based support services for patient families. At the beginning of the pandemic, which required many providers to transition to telehealth, the SmartCare BHCS team reached out to all their providers to offer support and to inform them that BHCS will remain open without any interruption to services. Related to the pandemic, BHCS clients have been reporting a heightened severity of symptoms and needs. In response, BHCS created a comprehensive resource list for clients and families with COVID-19 related challenges, which includes resources for financial support, health education, shelter, behavioral health support, legal support, and self-care activities. Additionally, BHCS created virtual telehealth forums offered, in separate weekly one-hour sessions, to providers and clients and their families to receive education and support. They continue to gain success and attendance, and at times include special guests to discuss specific topics, such as Dr. Carla Marienfeld, the Medical Director of the UCSD Addiction Recovery and Treatment Program, who presented on excessive alcohol use.
- At the start of the pandemic, the Vista Hill SmartCare Rural Program immediately transitioned to a virtual platform and has been successfully providing telehealth services to all their clients at each of their 5 clinic/community sites. They have been creative and innovative in ways to engage their clients and created a Social Media Committee to grow their online community. As a result, their social media platform has been able to provide health education and wellness resources with amazing educational posts, positive messages, self-care tips, and basic needs resources, such as food distribution sites.
- Health Quality Partners hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Primary Care and Behavioral Health Integration Summit in a virtual format for the first time. The Integration Summit was held over the course of three days in November 2020 and had over 300 attendees. The presentations covered a wide range of topics with a focus on the effects of the pandemic in 2020 as well as a keynote address by Rhea Boyd, MD, the Chief Medical Officer of 2-1-1 San Diego, who discussed structural racism, inequity, and behavioral health services.

**Workforce, Education and Training (WET)**

The Cultural Competency Academy (CCA) contract, a new component of BHS's Workforce, Education and Training program, was awarded in September 2018. Through this academy, BHS and BHS contracted staff received training focused on clinical and recovery interventions for multicultural populations. The CCA completed its first graduation and capstone project presentation in December 2020, with 42 participants completing the five-day foundational series. Project topics included, but not limited to, increasing cultural awareness, inclusion of LGBT clients within private practice, outreach to agencies with diverse populations and development of indigenous mental health policy.

Another key WET component, the Justice Involved Services Training Academy (JISTA) was developed in 2018 in partnership with the County's Public Safety Group to provide training to SUD and mental health treatment providers to address the criminogenic needs and treatment for the BHS justice involved population. JISTA completed its fourth cohort in November 2020; this cohort began in January 2020 and was temporarily halted due to COVID-19 gathering restrictions. The remaining trainings were converted to a virtual format, where 16 participants completed the series and capstone presentation.

Respectfully submitted,



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cc: Dean Arabatzis, Acting Agency Director  
Cecily Thornton-Stearns, Assistant Director and Chief Program Officer  
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