



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

Behavioral Health Division

Mental Health Advisory Board

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Salud Mental y
Tratamiento del Uso
de Sustancias

May 15, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street, Room 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Letter of recommendation to reinstate the HSA Budget FY2025-26

To: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

The Santa Cruz County Mental Health Advisory Board recommends that the county reinstate the HSA budget for FY2025-26 including the funding for MHCAN, Gemma, and the 74 staff positions including the suicide prevention coordinator.

The HSA and specifically the Behavioral Health department uniquely provides the most cost-effective services to save lives, reduce suffering, and improve the safety and vibrancy for the community and visitors of Santa Cruz County.

No other departments in the FY2025-26 budget have received the cuts and funding eliminations the BH department have received. The BH department receives the smallest allocation of any department, approximately 7% of its total budget, from the county General fund. Additionally, the HSA and BH department receive the most matching funds from the State and Federal government of any SC county department.

The proposed FY2025-26 budget cuts to HSA/BH will inevitably result in an increase in expenses by the county to fill the gaps by Law enforcement, Fire and EMS, private service providers such as Dominican and Watsonville Community Hospital, PAMF and Kaiser, Santa Cruz County Community Health and other private and county contracted service providers.

Again, the Santa Cruz County Mental Health Advisory Board recommends that the county reinstate the HSA budget for FY2025-26 including the funding for MHCAN, Gemma, and the 74 staff positions including the suicide prevention coordinator.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Xaloc Cabanes".

Xaloc Cabanes, Chair
Mental Health Advisory Board