



## **County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors**

### **Agenda Item Submittal**

**From:** Health Services Agency

**Subject:** Revenue Agreement with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2025

**Formal Title:** Approve agreement with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation in the amount of \$786,375 for implementation of the Low-Barrier Opioid Treatment at Syringe Services Programs Project, and take related actions

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Approve a multi-year revenue agreement with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, Contract No. 25R0383, in the amount of \$786,375, in partnership with the California Department of Public Health, for the implementation of the Low-Barrier Opioid Treatment at Syringe Services Programs Project, and authorize the Health Services Agency Director or designee to sign the agreement and any related grant documents and amendments; and
2. Adopt a resolution to accept and appropriate unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$205,579 from The Center at Sierra Health Foundation for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

### **Executive Summary**

The Health Services Agency (HSA) Public Health Division (Public Health) has been awarded non-competitive funding in the amount of \$786,375 from the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for the State Opioid Response (SOR) 4 grant for implementation of the Low-Barrier Opioid Treatment at Syringe Services Program (SSP) Project. HSA requests Board approval of a revenue agreement with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation (The Center) and to accept unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$205,579 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25. The goal of this project is to address the opioid and stimulant use crisis by supporting and expanding prevention, education, stigma reduction, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services for people with opioid use disorder (OUD), stimulant use disorder, and substance use disorder (SUD) in collaboration with the HSA Health Centers Division (Health Centers) Homeless Persons' Health Project (HPHP) Street Medicine Team.

### **Discussion**

On May 16, 2023, the Board approved a revenue agreement with The Center in the amount of \$349,500 for the implementation of the Low-Barrier Opioid Treatment at SSP Project, as funded by DHCS' SOR 3 grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The grant period was from March 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

In September 2024, Public Health received a letter of commitment from DHCS to award the SOR 4 grant for the Low-Barrier Opioid Treatment at SSP Project, through an invitation-only application process, and to authorize its spending. In November 2024, The Center, DHCS' administrative entity for this project, invited Public Health to apply for an additional three-year grant, and on December 9, 2024, HSA received notification that Santa Cruz County was awarded \$786,375. The proposed revenue agreement has a term of September 30, 2024 through September 29, 2027.

SOR 3 funding was used to hire extra help staff who worked with Safe Use and Opioid Prevention Program (SUOPP), formerly known as the County Syring Services Program (SSP), participants to navigate through barriers and to link participants to treatment providers as well as to fund existing program staff. Patients were helped to, for instance, attain cell phones, sign up for Medi-Cal benefits, access public transportation, etc. and staff were able to maintain contact with participants who were contemplating entering treatment to encourage them to do so. Additionally, these staff members utilized a referral database to improve tracking of referrals to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) providers and expanded the use of the database to include other barrier navigation.

Due to the increased interactions with persons who use drugs (PWUD) and increased ability to track MAT participation and barriers, achieved with SOR 3 funding, SUOPP has been able to determine that there is a significant loss of potential MAT participation when PWUD are required to plan, travel, and navigate to off-site MAT services. Participation rates were shown to increase when SUOPP was able to embed a medical assistant and/or clinician within the outreach team. SOR4 funding will enable Public Health to continue this best practice and increase the hours that a clinician is providing direct MAT linkage with the outreach team, as well as to continue to track the SUOPP clients, and expand the reach of the SUOPP MAT program.

### **Financial Impact**

The SOR 4 grant with The Center, Contract No. 25R0383, in the total amount of \$786,375 spans three fiscal years. The resolution accepts unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$205,579 into HSA Public Health's SUOPP FY 2024-25 Approved Budget under account 362210/40894/H62304, with remaining funding to be appropriately budgeted in the subsequent fiscal years. Funds are appropriated into GL 362210, as detailed in the resolution, for personnel costs (supplanting as allowable), in addition to office and testing supplies, and client incentives. No new County General Funds are needed or requested.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

### **Submitted By:**

Monica Morales, Director of Health Services

### **Recommended By:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

### **Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.