



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Health Services Agency

Subject: Mental Health Services Act 2024-2025 Plan Update

Meeting Date: February 11, 2025

Formal Title: Adopt resolution approving submission of the Mental Health Services Act 2024-2025 Annual Update to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission of the State Department of Health Care Services, and take related actions

Recommended Action

Adopt a resolution approving submission of the Mental Health Services Act 2024-2025 Annual Update to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission of the California Department of Health Care Services and authorizing the Health Services Agency Director to execute related documents required for submission.

Executive Summary

California Proposition 63 (2004) established the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to provide funding to counties for mental health services. MHSA requires counties to submit to the State annually updated plans for programmatic expenditures supported by MHSA funding. Following an extensive community stakeholder process and public comment period, the Health Services Agency (HSA) developed the MHSA Annual Update 2024-2025, which includes the Annual Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Report that provides a programmatic funding plan. This Annual Plan Update includes stakeholder feedback to prioritize program planning and funding. The Mental Health Services Act has allowed the community to continue receiving high quality, community driven mental health services for vulnerable populations.

Discussion

California Welfare and Institutions Code Section §5847 requires counties to submit an MHSA Three-Year Program and Expenditure Plan (Three-Year Plan) and two subsequent Annual Updates. On June 13, 2023, the Board approved the submission of the Three-Year Plan 2023-2026, and this fiscal year is currently the second year of the Plan.

The Plan Update, which includes the PEI report that provides a programmatic funding plan, is typically submitted at the beginning of the relevant fiscal year; however, this year HSA Behavioral Health Division (BHD) was late in completing the Community Program Planning Process (CPPP). BHD presented the draft Plan Update to the Local Mental Health Board, the Santa Cruz County Mental Health Advisory Board (MHAB), to open the public comment period on November 21, 2024, and then closed public comment on December 23, 2024. BHD engaged Research Development Associates (RDA) to assist in engaging the public in the CPPP and preparing the Plan Update documents.

To submit the MHSA Annual Update 2024-2025, BHD conducted a community-wide survey in both English and Spanish and generated over 140 responses. Extensive notice and advertising went out through the Santa Cruz Sentinel and the Pajaro Valley Pajaronian with links to the survey. In addition, BHD posted on multiple social media sites through the Santa Cruz County Facebook and Instagram accounts, and paper

copies of the survey were provided in English and Spanish at three community sites – Mental Health Client Action Network (MHCAN) in Mid-County, Community Connection in Santa Cruz - Harvey West, and Mariposa Center in Watsonville. At least 30 survey responses were gathered from consumers of services and people with lived experience of behavioral health conditions. Finally, the survey was emailed to BHD listservs of County and community stakeholders, and went out through the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Santa Cruz County Newsletter.

BHD also advertised for public comment on the Plan Update through the Santa Cruz Sentinel and the Pajaro Valley Pajaronian, including the opportunity to comment in person at the November 21, 2024, MHAB meeting, via email, or via mail. Additionally, BHD provided a printed copy of the plan and the attached presentation slides (in English and Spanish) with a form for comment at both the Watsonville and Santa Cruz County BHD sites and at MHCAN. BHD also posted information with links to the Plan Update and opportunity to comment via the County social media sites. All comments received were incorporated into the final plan.

The final Mental Health Services Act Annual Update 2024-2025 was developed based on MHSA funded activities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 and the input referenced above from the community and is now ready for Board approval and submission to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) of the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

Key highlights from the CPPP:

- 62% of survey respondents either agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral that BHD's services met the needs of people experiencing a mental health crisis.
- 63% of survey respondents either agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral that BHD's prevention and early intervention services help people before they develop serious mental illness.
- 64% of survey respondents either agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral that BHD's services meet the community needs.
- 78% of survey respondents either agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral that BHD's services are available at convenient locations.
- 62% of survey respondents either agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral that BHD's services are available at convenient times.
- 90% of survey respondents either agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral that BHD's services are welcoming.
- 87% of survey respondents either agreed, strongly agreed or were neutral that BHD's services support client's wellness.

Strengths of the Plan include:

- Services provided support client's wellness and recovery, including families in treatment planning, such are respectful of culture and are welcoming.
- Most respondents reported knowing where to go or who to call to access services for themselves or someone else.

System, program, and service challenges or gaps include:

- More preventive services and support are needed.
- A wider variety of services is desired.
- Workforce gaps impact availability or timeliness of some services.

The top three areas/populations of need identified by community input are:

- 1) People experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity and behavioral health conditions.
- 2) Youth experiencing a behavioral health crisis.
- 3) Individuals with early signs of behavioral health needs (i.e. early intervention services).

The final MHSA 2024-2025 Plan Update is attached. The presentation for the Local MHAB slides in English and Spanish are also attached.

Financial Impact

Projected expenses for FY 2024-2025 for Community Services and Supports are \$20,783,370, for Prevention and Early Intervention are \$5,257,319, and for Innovations are up to \$1,890,000. These programs are funded by a combination of MHSA projected FY 2024-2025 distributions and prior year unspent funds. There are no Prudent Reserve transfers, and the principal balance remains at \$2,997,367. Full fiscal impact can be found in the attached 2024-2025 Plan Update, pages 120-126.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Operational Excellence

Submitted By:

Monica Morales

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.