

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
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Community-Based Mental Health Incubation Academy

The Los Angeles County (County) Department of Mental Health (DMH) has historically embarked on bold initiatives to address the mental health needs of the County's most vulnerable residents through innovative uses of funds. These initiatives have been effective thus far, however, efforts could be even more far reaching into communities, particularly if we focus on assisting smaller community-based and grassroots organizations.

Research shows that establishing trust and demonstrating cultural competence are critical to the effective delivery of services in trauma-impacted communities. Organizations that are indigenous to a community are likely to be recognized and respected as trustworthy and culturally competent. These organizations can more easily monitor the pulse of individual needs in their respective geographical service delivery areas, as they are proximally close to the consumers. Their service delivery is often family-centered, uniquely tailoring prevention and family strengthening practices for the communities they serve.

Unfortunately, many of the smaller community-based and grassroots organizations lack the structure and institutional capacity to become County contractors. This is a solvable problem. DMH could explore how to support this effort to reach underserved, disenfranchised families and children through strengthening organizations that are trusted by our most impacted communities.

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A “Community-Based Mental Health Incubation Academy” (Academy) could be established to help build the capacity of organizations alongside a Fund that would allow them to deliver prevention and mental health services in their communities. The Academy would support grassroots community-based organizations from all over the County. It would provide technical assistance and mentorship with the goal of developing the infrastructure and workforce necessary to become DMH contractors. Training topics could include: tracking and managing revenue and expenditures; County contracting principles; fundamentals of budget preparation and management; internal controls and safeguard best practices; principles of non-profit organizational management; and using data to track services and outcomes.

In addition, those organizations that are enrolled in the Academy could have access to a Fund that would allow them to support the physical and mental health well-being of the community. Research continues to show that the benefits of community-based services outweigh those of institutional care. These services would reduce risk factors and build protective factors to prevent community members from developing a potentially severe mental illness, which will help mitigate prolonged suffering from mental illness.

The County’s Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships (Center) could work with DMH to find private sector partners to help support the Academy and the Fund. The Center has raised a significant amount of money in the last two years and has helped government and philanthropy in the County move the needle on the development of prevention-related programs and services for at-risk children, youth, and communities. As the Center continues to grow, it will be expanding partnerships with agencies throughout the County. The Center and DMH would be ideal partners in helping to develop a “Community-Based Mental Health Incubation Academy” and Fund.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of the Department of Mental Health in consultation with the Auditor-Controller and the Director of the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships, and a cross-section of appropriate stakeholder organizations to provide a written report in 60 days containing recommendations for establishing a Community Based Mental Health Incubation Academy (Academy) and Fund. The Academy will provide training and

instruction to smaller, community-based, non-profit entities geographically sited in the communities they serve regarding the appropriate, effective and efficient management of non-profit organizations. The Fund will combine public and private-sector dollars to provide grants to organizations enrolled in the Academy to provide prevention and mental health services. This report should include:

- a. Recommendations on where the Academy and Fund initiative should reside, whether within a County department or elsewhere;
 - b. Recommendations for selection criteria for program participants;
 - c. Recommendations for curriculum and program design;
 - d. Fund grant requirements and the services covered by the Fund;
 - e. Recommendations for ensuring that the training offered by the Academy reaches the intended audience, including those entities currently providing services to their respective communities but are unknown to the County;
 - f. Recommendations regarding proposed outcomes and measures of success.
2. Direct County Counsel to provide a written analysis within 60 days of legal issues presented, if any, by the recommendations contained in the written report.

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