

Addressing the Shortage of Mental Health Beds II

On January 22, 2019, this board approved a motion entitled "Addressing the Shortage of Mental Health Hospital Beds" which highlighted the need to remedy longstanding service gaps in Los Angeles County's mental health system of care, with particular attention to our treatment bed capacity. In short, the mental health system of care needs to increase its treatment bed capacity and optimize the management of these beds in order to deliver enough high-quality facility-based treatment to avoid: overcrowded psychiatric emergency rooms with long wait-times for acute psychiatric beds; cycling homeless individuals with mental illness and often co-occurring substance use disorder in and out of hospitals and on and off the streets with no sustainable path to recovery; incarcerating individuals with mental illness and often co-occurring substance use disorder in lieu of receiving needed care in a treatment (rather than a custody) facility; high hospital readmission rates; and long waitlists to transition patients from costly acute treatment settings to the appropriate level of care.

At the Board's request, the Department of Mental Health, in coordination with the Chief Executive Officer, assessed this massive and complex issue by engaging a full range of county, academic, healthcare industry, legal, law enforcement and community subject matter experts, including clients and families. Together, this group, achieved general consensus on the following three things. First, there is a significant shortage of mental health treatment beds for those who truly need them, and this shortage must be remedied. Second, beyond the lack of bed capacity, the shortage is worsened by issues with service quality and the efficiency of client flow through those beds. Finally, the only way to sustainably address the myriad problems is to look at the whole system of mental health care and the continuum of services, including all of the factors that play a role prior to, during, and after facility-based treatment, each of which in combination acts to constrain the availability of mental health treatment beds.

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MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

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BARGER _____

In analyzing the whole system of mental health beds and services, the Department of Mental Health has prepared a comprehensive report, dated October 29, 2019, recommending a two-year pilot and related strategies to expand and improve mental health bed capacity and service quality throughout the system. This pilot will seek to procure up to 500 mental health treatment beds of varying types through the use of DMH available funding with a one-year progress report to assess its status and address any potential challenges and barriers to its success.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors adopt the October 29, 2019 report issued by the Department of Mental Health and approve the "Recommended Actions for the Board of Supervisors" as set forth in said report which includes a two-year pilot to procure up to 500 mental health treatment beds.

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