

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND  
HILDA L. SOLIS

October 19, 2021

**Pursue an Agreement with Metro to Provide Mental Health Crisis Response**

In June, the Board directed the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to develop a plan for outreaching to and partnering with cities to help expand Alternative Crisis Response (ACR) systems throughout LA County (County). During the course of this outreach, a non-city partner, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), expressed interest in exploring a similar partnership.

Metro approached DMH with a proposal to enter into an agreement to engage more effectively with persons who are in cognitive crisis in need of support while on the Metro system. Currently, DMH partners with County and other municipal law enforcement agencies to provide immediate field response to situations involving mentally ill, violent, or high-risk individuals, and Metro provides another opportunity to address these public service needs specific to Metro transit facilities. The vision for this agreement is for DMH teams to respond to calls for assistance whenever mental illness is reported or suspected within the Metro transit system in coordination with other outreach services. These mental health experts will focus on contacting persons in need on the system utilizing de-escalation tactics to minimize the potential for incidents involving force. The scope of

MOTION

MITCHELL	_____
KUEHL	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
SOLIS	_____

work for this developing agreement will shift the primary responsibility for these contacts to the Department of Mental Health away from law enforcement.

Metro's goal is to reach an agreement with DMH by the end of the year to begin implementation January 2022 and to shift resources from existing law enforcement contracts that Metro has in place in support of this alternative solution in alignment with the vision of the Metro Board, the Metro CEO and the Metro Public Safety Advisory Committee. It is also worth noting that Metro already has an existing partnership with the County, specifically the Department of Health Services, for homeless outreach services in Metro areas, and so this would serve to expand Metro's partnership with the County to provide better services to those in need in Metro jurisdictions.

DMH operates co-response programs throughout the County, with teams consisting of one highly-trained law enforcement officer paired with one DMH-licensed mental health clinician to provide a specialized response to the highest-risk crises with the goal of diverting these individuals to treatment, minimizing uses of force and harmful outcomes, and mitigating incarceration and justice system involvement. DMH also operates a non-law enforcement mobile crisis response program (Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams or PMRT), with multidisciplinary teams consisting of at least one licensed mental health clinician and at least one other mental health professional, to provide care by default for individuals in crisis and in need of urgent in-person response.

Thus, DMH is well-positioned to partner with Metro on the development of a crisis response program dedicated to Metro areas, including co-response teams for the highest-risk crises but also non-law enforcement PMRT teams to provide default response to those in crisis, in addition to the existing County network. DMH should begin discussions with Metro as soon as possible to determine the terms of the agreement and collaborative services that will be provided.

**WE, THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Department of Mental Health (DMH), in coordination with County Counsel to work with Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) in negotiating an agreement stipulating the responsibilities of DMH and Metro in the execution and operation of co-response teams/psychiatric response team services. The scope of work for said agreement should be developed in partnership with and/or reviewed by Metro's Public Safety Advisory Committee.
2. Authorize the Director of DMH, or his designee, to sign and execute an agreement with Metro for a three-year term with an option to extend the term not to exceed a total of 6 years, if necessary; the agreement will be fully funded by Metro. Delegate authority to the Director of DMH, or his designee, to prepare, sign and execute future amendments to the agreement to: 1) revise the language of the agreement, including updates to reflect federal, State, and County regulatory and/or policy changes; 2) revise the annual funding amount; 3) add, delete, modify, or replace the service exhibits and/or statements of work; and 4) terminate the agreement with Metro in accordance with the agreement's termination provisions; with a prior review and approval as to form by County Counsel and prior notice to the Board and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
3. Authorize DMH to accept funds from Metro upon execution of the agreement.
4. Direct DMH to explore the feasibility of using contracted providers/legal entities to operate additional psychiatric mobile response teams to meet the service needs of this agreement. Approve and authorize the Director of DMH, or his designee, to solicit and execute or amend existing contracts for the provision of operation of co-response teams/psychiatric response team services in amounts not to exceed

funding received from Metro for these services, with prior review and approval as to form by County Counsel and prior notice to the Board and CEO.

5. Direct DMH, in coordination with the CEO, to hire the necessary staff to develop and deploy a number of co-response teams/psychiatric response teams countywide to provide the services as directed by the agreement with Metro. Approve interim ordinance authority, pursuant to Section 6.06.020 the County Code, for DMH to recruit and hire for the number of positions agreed upon in the agreement with Metro, subject to allocation by the CEO's Classification and Compensation Division.
6. Direct DMH to report back in 120 days on the status of the agreement.

# # #

JH:kc