

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
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**ESTABLISHING A ROADMAP TO ADDRESS THE MENTAL HEALTH BED
SHORTAGE**

Expanding mental health bed capacity has been a pillar of the Board of Supervisors' priorities for decades. On January 22, 2019, the board approved the motion "Addressing the Shortage of Mental Health Hospital Beds" which commissioned a report to identify the shortages in the mental health services system, specifically focused on inpatient treatment needs. This report identified the three following conclusions:

1. There is a significant shortage of mental health treatment beds for those who truly need them, and this shortage must be remedied.
2. Beyond the lack of bed capacity, the shortage is worsened by issues with service quality and the efficiency of client flow through those beds.
3. The only way to sustainably address the diverse challenges is to evaluate 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.

This report was adopted by the board on December 3, 2019, launching a two-year pilot program to procure up to 500 beds. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) met the 500 bed goal, but the aforementioned challenges still exist, and the need for additional beds in our network remain.

In scaling up our inpatient bed capacity, DMH and the County faced structural and financial challenges to bringing these beds online. The funds available to run our mental health services are inadequate to meet the growing inpatient need. Due to the federal institutes of mental disease (IMD) exclusion, reimbursement for beds in IMDs is capped at 16 beds, state realignment dollars will soon be exhausted, and state Mental Health Services Act funding cannot be used on locked facilities. Additionally, the county is in need of a diverse continuum of mental health beds and facilities, acute, subacute and residential, and all three have unique and often disconnected sources of funding.

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On January 20, 2023, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed a Local Emergency for Homelessness in the County of Los Angeles. This proclamation committed the County to streamlining the local, state and federal barriers to housing our most vulnerable population; a key component of this is housing and services for individuals suffering from severe mental illness. Also, the LA Alliance Lawsuit discussions have raised the potential for the County to be responsible for providing up to 1,500 mental health beds to address the homelessness crisis. Finally, the County will be launching the state's Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Court program early, and while focused primarily on outpatient services, the solvency and sustainability of these services rely on a robust inpatient continuum. In light of these and many other pressing stresses on our inpatient mental health system, the County must evaluate the current and forecasted bed capacity needs and build a roadmap to fund and sustain these beds.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Mental Health, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, to:

1. Retain a consultant to work with the departments on the analysis and roadmap, and analyze existing data and reports;
2. Perform a gap analysis analyzing the current and future projected needs for inpatient mental health beds and facilities, consulting existing data and reports, as well as other relevant departments, service providers and labor, and report back in writing to the Board in 180 days; and
3. Develop a comprehensive roadmap to address the specific gaps in the mental health bed continuum at each bed type and level, including existing and potential funding sources, bed procurement opportunities, and legal, contracting or regulatory barriers, and include this in the report back due in 180 days.

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