

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
JANICE HAHN

May 16, 2023

Designation of Jail Inpatient Unit/Acute Intervention Module for the Evaluation and Treatment of Mentally Ill Inmates at Twin Towers Correctional Facility

The Twin Towers Correctional Facility, located at 450 Bauchet Street, Los Angeles, California 90012 (Twin Towers), opened its doors in 1997. Since then, it has become the largest de facto mental health institution in the United States.

Approximately 6,800 inmates housed in County correctional facilities participate in jail mental health programs with varying levels of care and treatment. Typically, these inmates can be treated in an outpatient setting, meaning they live in a jail housing unit and receive regular mental health treatment but do not require 24-hour care. However, the number of inmates in need of acute, emergency mental health services is on the rise. On average, 40 or more acutely mentally ill inmates are booked on a daily basis.

In order for the Department of Health Services-Correctional Health Services (CHS) to expand its capacity to quickly treat, evaluate and assess inmates who are suffering from acute mental health illness, it has explored innovative strategies to transform existing space within the Twin Towers to meet growing and ever-changing needs of its population.

Working in close consultation with the State of California, CHS is creating a 16-bed Jail Inpatient Unit (JIU) at Twin Towers. The JIU, which will be referred to as the Acute Intervention Module (AIM), will serve as a Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act designated facility for the evaluation and treatment of persons determined to be a danger to self or others, or gravely disabled.

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MOTION

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It is anticipated that those inmates suffering from severe symptoms of a serious mental health disorder will be sent to the AIM, which will provide short-term, intensive care, evaluation, treatment and further assessment. The goal of the AIM will be to facilitate stabilization of those patients needing emergent mental health care. After stabilization, the exact discharge housing location will vary. The AIM and outpatient staff will work together to ensure that the inmate is reassessed and sent to appropriate jail or community-based housing.

The AIM is one of the key components of the County's Implementation Plans for compliance with Provisions 63 and 64 of the Settlement Agreement reached between the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the County of Los Angeles, and the Department of Justice, related to the availability of mental health housing and licensed mental health care in the jails. Specifically, the LPS-designated AIM will provide short-term care and mental health services to stabilize inmates suffering from acute, severe symptoms of a mental health disorder. It is integral to the County's strategies to reduce the number of inmates requiring forensic inpatient treatment for mental illness; continue its practice of treating inmates suffering from acute mental health illness consistent with their clinical needs; house inmates in mental health housing appropriate for the acuity of their mental health conditions; and increase the number of licensed mental health professionals and expand the mental health care continuum in the jails. The Board previously approved funding for the JIU/AIM in the supplemental budget approved on October 4, 2022, as part of the County's compliance efforts, along with funding for other critical compliance initiatives including expansion of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) programs throughout the jails, and conversion of Pitchess Detention Center (PDC) North to Moderate Observation Housing (MOH).

The AIM will abide by all applicable federal, State, and County laws, policies and procedures relating to the treatment of psychiatric patients. The AIM will be staffed based on approval by the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and per applicable provisions of the California Code of Regulations. The initial maximum capacity of the Jail Inpatient Unit will be 16 beds but may be expanded if approved by DHCS and the Local Mental Health Director.

CHS has been working with DHCS to establish the terms of the designation of the JIU. An important step in DHCS' approval process is this Board's designation of the JIU as an evaluation and treatment facility in accordance with the California Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 5150, 5151 and 5404, and Title 9, California Code of Regulations Sections 541(g) and 821.

By adding the new AIM, CHS will expand its capability to mental health crisis beds, and to treat the severely mentally ill that are newly arrested and/or have decompensated while in custody.

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After an initial assessment of the impact of the 16-bed AIM on the demand for acute mental health services, CHS intends to seek DHCS and Local Mental Health Director approval for an additional 32 beds.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Authorize and designate the Jail Inpatient Unit treatment facility located at Twin Towers Correctional Facility, Tower 1, 172 A, 450 Bauchet Street, Los Angeles, California 90012, as a treatment facility pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5404 and California Code of Regulations Title 9, Sections 541(g) and 821, et seq., with that designation to remain in effect until rescinded. The initial maximum capacity of the Jail Inpatient Unit will be 16 beds but may be expanded if approved by DHCS and the Local Mental Health Director. Treatment services on the Jail Inpatient Unit will be under the control of the Local Mental Health Director pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 9, Section 541(g).
2. Authorize and designate the Jail Inpatient Unit (which will be referred to as the Acute Intervention Module or AIM) as a treatment facility to evaluate, treat, assess and provide acute mental health treatment to inmates in custody under California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150 et seq.
3. Direct the Local Mental Health Director, or designee, to submit a letter to the California Department of Health Care Services, requesting approval of the designation of the Jail Inpatient Unit with an initial maximum capacity of 16 beds.
4. Adopt the Resolution set forth as Attachment 1 hereto.

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RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DESIGNATING A MODULE WITHIN TWIN TOWERS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY AS A JAIL INPATIENT UNIT FOR THE EVALUATION AND TREATMENT OF MENTALLY ILL INMATES UNDER CALIFORNIA WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTIONS 5150 ET SEQ. AND 5404 AND CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 9, SECTIONS 541(g) AND 821, ET SEQ.

WHEREAS, the Twin Towers Correctional Facility, located at 450 Bauchet Street, Los Angeles, California 90012 (Twin Towers), operating since 1997, has since become the largest de facto mental health institution in the United States;

WHEREAS, the number of inmates in need of acute, emergency mental health services is on the rise;

WHEREAS, those inmates suffering from severe symptoms of a serious mental health disorder need access to a unit that can provide short-term, intensive care, evaluation, treatment and further assessment;

WHEREAS, the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act ("LPS Act"), codified at Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5000 et seq., provides that the Board of Supervisors shall designate the facility and professional personnel authorized to provide evaluation and treatment of persons subject to the LPS Act pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 5150 (72-hour hold), 5250 (14-day hold), 5260 (2nd 14-day hold), 5270.15 (not more than an additional 30-day hold), 5350 et seq., (LPS Conservatorships), with approval by the State Department of Health Care Services, or its predecessor agency;

WHEREAS, California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5404 provides that a county may designate facilities, which are not hospitals or clinics, as 72-hour evaluation and treatment facilities and as 14-day intensive treatment facilities, with approval by the State Department of Health Care Services, as set forth in Title 9, California Code of Regulations Sections 541(g) and 821;

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services-Correctional Health Services (CHS), working in close consultation with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), is creating a Jail Inpatient Unit at Twin Towers to address the needs of inmates who suffer from severe symptoms of a serious mental disorder; and

WHEREAS, CHS wishes to expand its care continuum and develop a LPS-designated Jail Inpatient Unit, which will be referred to as the Acute Intervention Module (AIM), that will provide urgent evaluation, treatment and further assessment to inmates in custody who are suffering from acute mental illness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, as follows:

1. The Jail Inpatient Unit (which will be referred to as the Acute Intervention Module (AIM)), located at Twin Towers Correctional Facility, Tower 1, 172 A, 450 Bauchet Street, Los Angeles, California 90012, is hereby authorized and designated as of May 16, 2023, pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code section 5404 and California Code of Regulations Title 9, Sections 541(g) and 821, and that the designation shall remain in effect until rescinded. The initial maximum capacity of the Jail Inpatient Unit will be 16 beds but may be expanded if approved by DHCS and the Local Mental Health Director. Treatment services on the Jail Inpatient Unit will be under the control of the Local Mental Health Director pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 9, Sections 541(g).
2. The purpose of the Jail Inpatient Unit, which is intended to be LPS-designated, shall be to evaluate, treat, assess and provide acute mental health treatment to inmates in custody for up to 72 hours under California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150 et seq.

The foregoing County of Los Angeles Resolution was adopted on the 16th day of May 2023, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles.



Board of Supervisors of the
County of Los Angeles

By: Jamie Hahn
Chair

CELIA ZAVALA, Executive Officer-Clerk
of the Board of Supervisors of the
County of Los Angeles

By: LaChelle Smitherman
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DAWYN R. HARRISON
County Counsel

By: Caroline Craddock
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Health Services Division