

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS

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**Funding Hospital-Based Navigators to Pilot Plans of Safe Care for Pregnant and Parenting People Struggling with Substance Use**

Perinatal substance use has a significant public health and child welfare impact, contributing to negative health outcomes for both the parent and child, as well as increases in the removal of children and placement in out-of-home care. Substance use disorder (SUD) research shows that the adverse impacts of SUDs on health outcomes include preterm birth, stillbirth, low birth weight and growth impairment, neurological damage and developmental delays, birth defects and malformations, breathing and feeding complications, neonatal abstinence syndrome, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, lower likelihood of accessing prenatal care, poorer obstetric outcomes, maternal death, higher likelihood of antenatal emergency department visits and hospitalizations, and higher chance of sexually transmitted infections.

Federal and state laws require that counties maintain policies and procedures

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addressing the needs of infants prenatally exposed to substances, including the development of a Plan of Safe Care (POSC) to support infants and their families, and procedures for making referrals to child welfare agencies by healthcare providers when necessary. California state laws are clear that substance use in and of itself should not trigger a referral to a child welfare agency unless there is an apparent child safety concern; healthcare providers should conduct a newborn risk assessment before consulting and/or making a referral to the child welfare agency.

In order to address the need to better support pregnant and parenting people struggling with substance use and meet federal and state requirements around POSC, the Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection (OCP) has been leading the “LA County POSC Collaborative,” which includes SHIELDS for Families (SHIELDS), the Los Angeles County Department Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Los Angeles County Mandated Supporting Initiative (MSI), First 5 Los Angeles (F5LA), the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH), the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS), St. Francis Medical Center, and Adventist Health White Memorial Hospital. The goal of this collaborative is to pilot initiating the POSC process from hospital and healthcare settings so that pregnant people with a history of substance use, pregnant people using substances, and parents/caregivers of substance-exposed infants are assessed for needs and strengths as early as possible, and referred and linked to appropriate community-based services.

The efforts of the LA County POSC Collaborative align with and expand existing LA County efforts to increase the capacity of community-based resources to meet families’ needs before they touch the child welfare system. OCP has partnered with

DCFS to include the POSC pilot as one of DCFS's State Block Grant (SBG)-funded promotion and prevention pilots, to test access to the Family First Prevention Services' Community Pathways approach to meeting families' needs before they become involved with DCFS. The County's POSC efforts are also part of the LA County Mandated Supporting Initiative (MSI), with POSC training and implementation materials available on the MSI website for hospital and healthcare providers countywide.

To support implementation of POSC pilots at multiple hospital sites, OCP has secured SBG funds through DCFS to support capacity building through trainings for hospitals and healthcare providers, project management support of pilot sites, and research of fiscal sustainability for POSC efforts long-term. OCP also applied for and received a multiyear "Road to Resilience" (R2R) grant from the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention for the LA County POSC Collaborative. The R2R grant funds hospital-based navigators from SHIELDS who can provide staffing support at four hospital sites piloting POSC – DHS's Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, DHS's Olive View-UCLA Medical Center (OVMC), St. Francis Medical Center, and Adventist Health White Memorial Hospital.

As pilot preparation and implementation has begun at these four hospital sites, the need for additional navigators beyond what was allocated from the R2R grant funding has been identified, including the addition of another hospital joining as a POSC pilot site – DHS's Los Angeles General Medical Center (LAGMC). OCP has worked with DCFS to identify additional DCFS funds to support additional navigators at LAGMC and OVMC, as well as to cover administrative costs, through SHIELDS. These funds can be made available through an existing agreement that DCFS has with SHIELDS through

Southern California Grantmakers to fund SBG-funded prevention pilots, including POSC.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to:

1. Amend, as needed, the Agreement with the Southern California Grantmakers (SCG) authorized by the Board on the April 18, 2023, for the development and implementation of the Plans of Safe Care for Pregnant and Parent People Struggling with Substance Use for the provision of prevention services. The Agreement will be effective upon execution through June 30, 2027.
2. Provide SCG with the amount of \$950,000, using Family First Transition Act funds and State Block Grant and cover the associated administrative fee of three percent.

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