

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

REVISED Evaluating the First Year of CARE Court in Los Angeles County

On September 14, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 1338 (Umberg/Eggman), the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act, officially creating the new CARE Court program in California. CARE Court authorizes specified people, like family members, first responders, and health professionals, to [petition a civil court](#) to create a CARE plan for an adult who is suffering from schizophrenia spectrum and psychotic disorders and lacks medical decision-making capacity. The bill required all counties in California to implement CARE Court but allowed them to do so at different timelines. Given magnitude of the current mental health crisis, Los Angeles County (County) opted to implement CARE Court one year earlier than required in the legislation. On December 1, 2023, Los Angeles County’s CARE Court program became operational at the Norwalk Courthouse with the collaboration of the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Los Angeles County Superior Courts (Courts), and Los Angeles County Office of the Public Defender.

Since then, the County has expanded its CARE Court outreach and support through hosting various community stakeholder meetings, providing support to petitioners in collaboration with the courts through [self-help centers across the County](#), and collaborating with the Department of Public Health’s Office of Substance Abuse and

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Prevention Control (SAPC) and DHS Housing for Health to increase housing resources for CARE Court participants. These efforts have led to DMH receiving ~~348~~ 365 petitions as of January 13, 2025, with ~~33~~ 50 resulting in CARE agreements, and ~~4~~ 3 leading to CARE plans. These numbers are much lower than was originally estimated by State officials before CARE Court legislation was passed. Additionally, while many different types of individuals qualify to petition someone for CARE Court, the majority of petitions have been submitted by family members.

As CARE Court enters its second year in Los Angeles County, the County should take time to analyze data from the first year and speak to stakeholders to assess ways to improve the program. CARE Court has the potential to help individuals suffering from severe mental illness receive the treatment and care they need. It can also be an important alternative to conservatorship or incarceration, so CARE Court should be a resource available to everyone who could qualify to ensure that Los Angeles County continues to provide upstream treatment opportunities to individuals living with severe mental health and/or substance use disorders.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors (Board) direct the Department of Mental Health to do the following:

1. Report back in writing in 30 days with an overview and analysis of the first year of CARE Court in Los Angeles County. The report should include the following:
 - a. Data on the total number of petitions submitted to CARE Court, their sources, and outcomes;
 - b. A summary of the outreach and public awareness efforts that have been conducted, including any public awareness campaign, a list of all the organizations that have received CARE Court training, and help center

visits;

- c. The number and type of DMH filled and vacant positions dedicated to CARE Court;
 - d. An update on state funding for CARE Court; and
 - e. Identified challenges that were faced in the first year of implementation, anticipated future challenges, and opportunities for improvement.
2. In collaboration with the Mental Health/Behavioral Health Commission, gather stakeholder feedback on CARE Court. Stakeholders should include, but not be limited to, family members who have submitted petitions to CARE Court, first responders, city officials, homeless outreach providers, medical professionals, and Court officials.
- a. Report back to the Board in 60 days with:
 - i. A summary of the stakeholder feedback;
 - ii. An overview of implementation best practices from other counties;
 - iii. Recommendations for improvement; and
 - iv. A plan to improve and enhance CARE Court in Los Angeles County.

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