



DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

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August 08, 2023

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

ADOPTED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

87-K August 8, 2023

CELIA ZAVALA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF INTERIM ORDINANCE AUTHORITY FOR DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH'S
NEW ALTERNATIVE CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT
(SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 1)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

Request approval of interim ordinance authority for the Department of Mental Health to add and fill thirty-four positions to oversee the network of Alternative Crisis Response services within Los Angeles County.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

Approve interim ordinance authority, pursuant to Section 6.06.020 of the County Code, for Department of Mental Health (DMH) to recruit and hire thirty-four key personnel to manage and oversee the network of Countywide Alternative Crisis Response (ACR) services, subject to allocation by the Chief Executive Office (CEO), Classification Division.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Board approval of the recommended action will allow DMH to permanently hire dedicated personnel to establish the ACR Unit including administrative support to implement, oversee, expand, and realize crisis response services within Los Angeles County (County).

Over the past year, DMH temporarily utilized existing personnel from across the Department that

served as subject matter experts, as well as key consultants, to take the first steps towards redesigning the crisis response system within County. In addition, DMH identified the long-term permanent staffing required to fully operationalize the ACR Unit, including administrative support staff, and the overall aspiration of ACR.

The personnel for ACR will be responsible for managing the network of ACR services and providers in County and implementing procedures that cross the core components of a crisis response system. This will include the County's 9-8-8 crisis call center, ACCESS call center, Field Intervention Teams, urgent care centers, and crisis residential treatment programs, with a common goal of providing the least restrictive appropriate level of care to individuals. The personnel will also manage all ACR relevant funds and specific infrastructure, such as the Dispatch Board.

The personnel will be responsible for ensuring crisis response services and systems are coordinated and comprehensive throughout the County, collaborating with cities within the County, law enforcement agencies, and other County Departments such as the Justice, Care & Opportunities Department and Sheriff's Department. They will work with community stakeholders to ensure their needs are met and advocate at the Local, State, and Federal level when gaps in the crisis response system are identified both clinically and administratively.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended actions are consistent with County's Strategic Plan Goal I: Enhance the Quality and Capacity of Mental Health Services and Supports in Partnerships with Clients, Strategy I.1: Enhance Delivery of Systems That Balance and Transform a Continuum of Services. Strategy 1.2: Provide Integrated Mental Health, Physical Health and Substance Use Services. Strategy 1.3: Support clients in Establishing Their Own Recovery.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The annual cost of these positions is roughly \$7.3 million and will be funded with departmental operating revenues, including Assembly Bill 109 ACR one-time, which was added in the Budget Year 2023-24 Supplemental Changes process. Funding for future fiscal years will be requested in subsequent Budget Phases.

There is no net County cost impact associated with the recommended action.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

On March 4, 2020, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously approved the motion "Crisis Response Coordination" to develop a steering committee to advise on the development, expansion, coordination and utilization of crisis response resources throughout the County. Following this Board motion, the ACR Steering Committee met to discuss the County's current crisis response system, its gaps and needs, and a vision for its future. The ACR Steering Committee released a preliminary report on August 14, 2020, ("LA County Alternative Crisis Response: Preliminary Report and Recommendations") that identified three core components of the County's crisis response system: regional crisis call center network ("someone to talk to"), crisis mobile team response ("someone to respond"), and crisis receiving and stabilization facilities ("somewhere to go"). The report noted that the crisis response system must be redesigned to dramatically reduce and mitigate law enforcement responses wherever and whenever possible.

In November 2022, DMH officially assumed responsibility for ACR within County. The aspiration for ACR is that individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis within County are treated quickly, effectively, and with empathy at the least restrictive level of care to meet their short and long term needs in the mental health system, as appropriate, so that they can remain in their community.

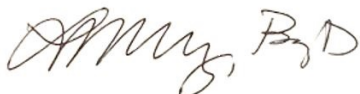
A “behavioral health crisis” means any situation in which a person’s behavior puts them at risk of hurting themselves or others, and/or prevents them from being able to care for themselves or function effectively in the community, as a result of a mental health condition or substance use. Behavioral health crises may include, but are not limited to, thoughts or plans of suicide; violent, aggressive, or erratic behavior; losing touch with reality; or rapid mood swings.

As described in federal guidance, mobile crisis services are a critical component of an effective behavioral health crisis continuum of care. Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems may begin implementing the mobile crisis services benefit as soon as January 1, 2023, and shall have the benefit fully implemented by December 31, 2023.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

DMH intends to establish an ACR Unit, including administrative support, to oversee an array of services designed to timely reach any person experiencing a behavioral health crisis in County, whether in their home, school, workplace, or any other community-based location. The role of the ACR Unit is to ensure coordination between existing crisis services as well as new and expanded services.

Respectfully submitted,



LISA H. WONG, Psy.D.

Director

LHW:CDD:KN:JH:atm

- c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
- Chief Executive Office
- County Counsel
- Chairperson, Mental Health Commission