



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

LACDMH Public Information Office

(213) 738-3700

pio@dmh.lacounty.gov

LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICIALLY TRANSITIONS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT

New changes for behavioral health prioritize funding for people with significant mental health and substance use disorders, and expand housing interventions

LOS ANGELES, CA — Effective today, the Los Angeles County's Departments of Mental Health (LACDMH) and Public Health (DPH) join counties statewide to transition from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to the voter-approved Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) as part of a broader effort to transform behavioral health in California known as the Behavioral Health Transformation.

In March 2024, California voters passed Proposition 1, which amended the 2004 Mental Health Services Act, allowing for the transition to the current Behavioral Health Services Act. The act adds no new taxes but reconfigures how the tax for mental health maintains State-provided services while allowing for funding for substance use disorder services. Proposition passage also approved the issuance of \$6.3 billion in bonds to support treatment and housing beds.

The BHSA maintains most of the funding allocated by the MHSA, but changes how those funds are used and expands planning to partner with the County's Department of Public Health's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH SAPC) Bureau to include all behavioral health programming.

"Many of BHSA's changes are administrative, which means consumers will experience a seamless transition to this new age of mental health care in Los Angeles County," said LACDMH Director Lisa H. Wong, Psy.D. "Through BHSA, the State's new funding mechanisms allow us to expand specialized services, invest in innovative programs and broaden our reach to better provide hope, recovery and wellbeing for all."

Los Angeles County is optimizing this reform to build a behavioral health system that is accessible, community-based, integrated, equity-driven and accountable. The shift allows LACDMH and DPH SAPC to provide a broader range of behavioral health services and expanded housing interventions, prioritizing individuals with significant mental health needs and/or substance use disorders.

“The BHSA is a great opportunity for us to reimagine mental health and substance use services to ensure that we focus on client-level needs with an eye toward enhancing care and outcomes,” said Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed., Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

BHSA restructures five existing funding categories into three: Full-Service Partnerships, Behavioral Health Services and Supports, and Housing Interventions. It is a change in how State funding must be allocated and accounted for. BHSA is broken down into these three main funding categories:

- *Housing and Operating Subsidies (30%)*: This category helps those with chronic homelessness by providing resources such as security deposits, interim housing, rental subsidies and licensed residential care.
- *Full-Service Partnerships (FSP) (35%)*: As LACDMH’s most intensive level of care, this category aims to do “whatever it takes” to help individuals of all ages who need services the most.
- *Behavioral Health Services and Supports (35%)*: This category is divided into two sub-categories.
 - *Early Intervention*, where funding targets engagement initiatives before the onset of serious mental illness in efforts to prevent homelessness, overdose and suicide.
 - *Flexible*, intended for outpatient and crisis care and can be used for workforce support.

LACDMH and the DPH SAPC teams led implementation planning for BHSA with community stakeholders. The process featured 30 in-person and virtual planning sessions, reaching 224 stakeholder organizations across eight Service Areas. Engagement and dialogue around this service delivery system will be ongoing and will continue with our communities. Continuity of care is the anchor of this transition. No client will lose services and the transition is phased, so the system stabilizes as it changes.

While the transition to BHSA provides significant consumer-driven momentum for enhancing mental health and substance use services in Los Angeles County, changes to other programming are expected. Prevention programs funded by MHSA, previously

overseen by LACDMH, will now be administered by the California Department of Public Health.

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About the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)

As the nation's largest public mental health department, we ensure access to care and treatment for our most vulnerable residents in a region nearing 10 million people. With an annual budget exceeding \$4.5 billion and over 7,700 budgeted positions, LACDMH is dedicated to hope, recovery, and wellbeing for everyone across the County. For more information, visit dmh.lacounty.gov or follow @LACDMH on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

About the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is committed to promoting health equity and ensuring optimal health and well-being for all 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health comprises nearly 4,500 employees and has an annual budget of \$1.2 billion. To learn more, visit PublicHealth.LACounty.gov, and follow Public Health on social media at twitter.com/LAPublicHealth, facebook.com/LAPublicHealth, and youtube.com/LAPublicHealth.