



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
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Department Name: Behavioral Wellness
and County Executive
Office
Department No.: 043 and 012
For Agenda Of: February 6, 2024
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 45 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director(s) Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Behavioral Wellness Director

Contact Info: Katrina B. Fernandez, Fiscal & Policy Analyst (805) 568-3116

SUBJECT: KPMG Operational Performance Review – Santa Barbara County Crisis
Services

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file a report on KPMG’s Operational and Performance Review of the Santa Barbara County Crisis Services;
- b) Receive and file a report on the State required Expanded Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Services Benefit;
- c) Provide direction as appropriate; and
- d) Find that the proposed actions do not constitute a “Project” within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to 14 CCR 15378(b)(2), as it consists of general policy and procedure making

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to provide the Board an operational and performance report on County Crisis Services and provide an overview of the changes to services associated with the expanded Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Services Benefit. County Crisis Services are a collection of services designed to support individuals of all ages who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, a behavioral health emergency.

From July to September 2023, KPMG conducted an assessment of the Santa Barbara County Crisis Services operating model, including strategy, program delivery operations and performance, program costs, and resource alignment. The purpose of this review was to identify opportunities to enhance workflows and levels of services, potential overlap or duplication in service offerings between various crisis services offered and recommend evidence-based practices. KPMG's report, entitled "Santa Barbara County: Crisis Services Review" is attached. The Behavioral Wellness Department's response and implementation timeframe is also attached.

One of several KPMG's recommendations for enhancing Crisis Services is that the County align its current Mobile Crisis Services with the new expanded Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit. In 2023, the California Department of Health Care Services added "qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services" as a Medi-Cal covered benefit available to eligible beneficiaries experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder crisis outside of a hospital or other facility setting. The intent of the benefit is to establish mobile crisis services with the expertise to manage mental health and SUD conditions in a manner that facilitates recovery and reduces hospitalization, involvement in the criminal justice system, and homelessness. As a requirement of the expanded Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Services Benefit, the County prepared an implementation plan (Attachment C), which was approved by the Department of Health Care Services in January 2024, and is now in practice.

Background:

The County contracted with KPMG in May 2019, following a competitive process, to conduct departmental operations and performance reviews as part of the Renew '22 initiative. To date, sixteen department reviews have been completed or are in process, and six subject-specific reviews have been completed or are in process. KPMG reviews are designed to provide a high-level assessment of departments, identify strengths and opportunities, and benchmark financial and operational areas with similar jurisdictions. The County Executive Office works collaboratively with departments to review and monitor the implementation of KPMG's recommendations.

Overview of Crisis Services:

Santa Barbara County's Crisis Services are primarily overseen by the Department of Behavioral Wellness (BWell) and provide crisis response for clients of all ages across the County. Services include mobile crisis teams, crisis clinics, co-response teams and a designated Access Line through which individuals can access crisis care or coordination of services by telephone. The County also contracts with Casa Pacifica to provide youth crisis services through Safe Alternatives for Treating Youth (SAFTY).

In its review of Crisis Services, KPMG commended the County for its operation of walk-in crisis clinics, use of peer support in clinics, and establishment of co-response teams, all of which are leading practices for supporting individuals in crisis. The County was also commended for the responsiveness of its co-response and mobile crisis services teams and for its commitment to client service delivery and innovation, particularly in its planning for the Medi-Cal Crisis Services Benefit.

Overview of KPMG Recommendations:

The KPMG report identifies ten recommendations, divided into six categories: 1) Co-response; 2) Mobile Crisis; 3) Crisis Clinics; 4) Youth Services; 5) Access Line; and 6) Cross-programmatic opportunities. These recommendations are summarized below, and are discussed more fully in the attached response and implementation table.

Co-response

1.1: Establish joint metrics and targets with clear definitions, calculations, inclusionary and exclusionary criteria and sources to extrapolate data from. Display outcomes on a joint dashboard that is reviewed on a weekly and monthly basis.

Mobile Crisis

2.1: Revamp Mobile Crisis Services to align with the new Medi-Cal Crisis Benefits requirement, while establishing crisis worker roles in high referral volume areas, such as emergency departments and jails.

Crisis Clinics

3.1: Optimize Crisis Clinic capacity and capabilities through an effective marketing and communication plan developed by BWell and issued among key stakeholders. Shifting the model of care to be more fluid based on client need and engagement.

Youth Services

4.1: Recognizing the requirements for the new Medi-Cal Crisis benefits, in order to have the team financially sustainable, consider merging youth crisis services with adult crisis services to create a central team that services the County.

Access Line

5.1: Enhance Access Line features to include a designated Crisis Line that operate 24/7/365 for Child, Adolescents, Adults and Older Adults.

Cross-programmatic opportunities

6.1: Collaborate with law enforcement and establish a triage protocol that outlines which crisis team is most suited to attend crisis call within the community. Develop triage protocol documentation and conduct County wide education with key stakeholders.

6.1.a: Establish a Safety Protocol for the Mobile Crisis Team that aligns with the new Medi-Cal Crisis Benefits requirements.

7.1: Implement standardized documentation for mobile crisis teams as issued by DHCS. Develop standardized documentation and training for all other crisis staff. Conduct routine evaluation of clinicians' documentation. Develop improvement plans as required.

7.1.a: Standardization documentation and Handover Framework between Mobile Crisis/Co-Response Team and others, such as Emergency Departments.

8.1: Streamline data input and collection to one source of truth that will allow for effective analysis and decision making by management. In addition to aligning financial reimbursement by team to determine financial suitability.

BWell agrees with KPMG's recommendations for Crisis Services. As detailed in the Department Response and Implementation Plan included as Attachment B, some of the recommended changes have already been implemented, are currently underway, or are planned to be implemented in FY 2024-25.

Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit:

KPMG’s recommendation 2.1 regarding County Mobile Crisis Services includes aligning the program with the new Expanded Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit, which became effective in January 2024. This benefit includes prescribed interventions which focus largely on de-escalation, safety planning and the creation of warm-handoffs and follow up check-ins. The interventions aim to increase the likelihood of engagement of beneficiaries with ongoing care and thereby reducing the utilization of more costly services such as emergency rooms and justice services for those experiencing significant mental health and/or substance use disorder crises.

In early January 2024, Behavioral Wellness’ Mobile Crisis Benefit Implementation Plan was approved by the California Department of Health Care Services and the Department has already begun implementing the new requirements of the plan. Changes include a reorganization of the crisis services branch to be more mobile within the community by redeploying staff from crisis clinics to areas of increased need within the community; leveraging crisis clinics to offer bridge care for those in need while transitioning to ongoing care; shifting the service model to allow field based needs to be more fully met; and increasing mobile crisis staffing allowing for reduced response time.

Performance Measure:

Performance measures will be developed in conjunction with the report recommendations and included in future budget development to track progress and cost/benefit of the operational performance reviews.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Many of the recommendations provided by KPMG will not require additional resources or budget and, if implemented, will likely result in efficiencies of cost, time savings or improved outcomes. Other areas of improvement, may require additional resources, those recommendations will be evaluated through the annual budget process.

Behavioral Wellness’ Mobile Crisis Benefit implementation plan as approved by DHCS does not require the department to add any additional, positions. However, in order to meet the new benefit requirements, BWell is restructuring the Crisis Services delivery model by strategically reallocating existing positions within Crisis Services programs. No additional costs are anticipated as a result of this restructuring.

BWell does not currently anticipate a change in Medi-Cal revenue generated by Crisis Services teams due to this restructuring, as new Medi-Cal revenue generated through the Expanded Mobile Crisis Benefit is anticipated to offset the loss of Medi-Cal revenue previously generated through the old Crisis Services delivery model. It is important to note that this realignment of resources and responsibilities is designed to be cost-neutral. The department does not anticipate any additional financial burdens stemming from these changes.

Attachments:

- A) KPMG report - Santa Barbara County: Crisis Services Review
- B) Behavioral Wellness Department Response and Implementation Plan

C) County Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit Implementation Plan

D) KPMG PowerPoint

E) County Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit Implementation Plan PowerPoint

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