



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Behavioral Wellness & Sheriff-Coroner

Department No.: 043 & 032

Agenda Date: April 7, 2026

Placement: Departmental Agenda

Estimated Time: 1 HOUR

Continued Item: No

If Yes, date from: N/A

Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director(s): Bill Brown, Sheriff, Sheriff-Coroner 
Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director, Behavioral Wellness

Contact: Cherylynn Lee, Ph.D., Behavioral Services Manager, Sheriff
Joe Schmidt, Commander, Sheriff
John Winckler, MA, LMFT, Branch Chief of Specialty Programs,
Behavioral Wellness

SUBJECT: Sheriff's Office & Behavioral Wellness Co-Response Program & Funding Update

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: CEO

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file a presentation on the Co-Response program and funding update of the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office and Behavioral Wellness Co-Response Teams; and
- b) Determine that the above-recommended actions are not a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5), finding that the actions consist of administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

The purpose of this Board item is to provide a report for the Board of Supervisors on the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office (SBSO) and Behavioral Wellness (BWell) Co-Response program and the status of funding for the teams. Loss of grant funding and impending funding changes related to Proposition 1 will directly impact the ability to continue funding this program.

Discussion:

The Co-Response program is an important component of the County's behavioral health crisis response system. The model includes public safety and behavioral health professionals working as a team to respond to calls received by the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center (911) and/or individuals encountered in the community who express or demonstrate a possible behavioral health crisis. In Santa Barbara County, four Co-Response teams provide coverage 7 days per week in north and south county. Of the 56,590 total calls received by the Public Safety Dispatch Center in calendar year 2025, 4,561 calls (8%) were identified as having a mental health component, 2,070 of which led to dispatching Co-Response teams (COR).

COR 1 and COR 2 are responsible for calls in unincorporated areas of South County in Sheriff's jurisdiction, south of the Gaviota Tunnel to the Ventura County line. This includes the cities of Goleta and Carpinteria which are contract cities. COR 3 and COR 4 are responsible for calls in unincorporated areas of North County, north of the Gaviota Tunnel to the San Luis Obispo County line, including the cities of Buellton and Solvang which are also contract cities.

CORs are dispatched to known mental health calls, or teams will self-assign to calls where a mental health component exists. CORs are also an integral part of SBSO's Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) team, investigating and providing system direction and support for individuals who may be on a pathway to targeted violence. Teams also proactively engage in follow-up visits to individuals recently contacted. These additional services allow CORs to increase community engagement, with the goal of encouraging those served to engage in ongoing and critical treatment. Recently, CORs have made efforts to connect with individuals who experienced opioid overdose reversals where NarCan was administered by a deputy. The COR's follow-up accelerates the effort to encourage connections for substance use disorder treatment.

In 2024, Santa Barbara County contracted with KPMG to perform a review of the county's crisis services. In the report, KPMG commended the county's crisis services system in six key areas, one of which was the establishment of Co-Response, stating:

"The establishment of co-response teams across the County in collaboration with the Sheriff and the Police Departments is a leading practice for supporting individuals in crisis. Furthermore, across stakeholder engagements, stakeholders consistently commended the co-response teams for their responsiveness and service delivery in providing care to vulnerable clients."

The KPMG Crisis Services also had several key recommendations for the Co-response program. Those recommendations were as follows:

- Establish joint metrics and targets with clear definitions, calculations, inclusionary and exclusionary criteria, and sources from which to extrapolate data. Display outcomes on a joint dashboard reviewed on a weekly and monthly basis.
- Develop a minimum dataset (MDS).
- Develop a shared dashboard of agreed upon performance metrics across departments.
- Establish joint weekly meetings between BWell and law enforcement middle management.
- Establish monthly meetings between BWell and law enforcement senior management (or add to an already established agenda).
- Develop clear expectations for CORs, including physical location, hours of operation, community engagement, technology advancement, documentation, and a staff roster to provide coverage for Co-Response team members.

In response to recommendations from Social Finance and the KPMG review, the Sheriff's Office and Behavioral Wellness are continuing to develop joint metrics and targets meant to ensure progress toward the goals of this program.

All KPMG recommendations have been implemented except for a shared dashboard. Currently, BWell collects data on a dashboard, and the Sheriff's Office maintains data on a spreadsheet. There is no repository for shared BWell and Sheriff's Office data related to COR; however, one source for combined data will be evaluated.

Data for the program is collected from several sources and combined for the purpose of this presentation. The Public Safety Dispatch Center automated CAD data tracks the number of unique calls involving mental health, COR response to mental health calls, COR response to calls that are either non-mental health or unknown mental health, and time spent on those calls by COR teams and non-COR deputies. BWell and SBSO collect data based on the people the COR teams interact with on calls and proactive engagement/follow up efforts with a member of the community.

This data includes the number of people diverted from hospitals and arrests. Additionally, statistics are gathered on calls resulting in gun violence restraining orders (GVROs), 5150/5585 commitments, arrest/citations, diversions from the criminal justice system, safety plans, and follow-ups on previous cases. Calls are further broken down into the volume and activities occurring in each region of the County.

As further detailed in the fiscal analysis below, two of the four teams are funded for FY 26/27. However, with the passage of Proposition 1 and the reallocation of most county behavioral health funds from treatment programs to housing, ongoing funding for many treatment programs, including the practitioners assigned to COR, will no longer be available after June 2026. Proposition 1 makes changes to how county Mental Health Plans across California are funded and places emphasis on Reimbursable Services. Since Co-Response activities include significant time engaged in non-reimbursable services, it is not something BWell can continue to fund ongoing.

If funding for a fourth team cannot be secured, COR 4 would disband and North County would be served only by COR 3, resulting in 4 day per week coverage. Historically, South County receives twice as many mental health-related calls as North County, justifying COR 1 and COR 2 remaining in South County for 7 day per week coverage due to higher call volume.

Background:

Law Enforcement in the United States frequently encounter people with mental health and substance abuse issues. This accounts for 10-20% of all calls according to national statistics. This highlights the role that law enforcement plays as first responders in behavioral health crises. Following a fatal encounter between police and a mentally ill person in Memphis in 1988, law enforcement professionals, mental health professionals and advocates, and addiction professionals collaborated to develop what is currently known as the Memphis Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model. This provided the framework for our Santa Barbara County Co-Response program. The primary goals of this model are to increase safety in encounters between law enforcement and individuals in crisis, and when appropriate, divert persons with mental illness from the criminal justice system and into mental health treatment.

The COR program brings significant benefits to the community and the agencies involved. The ability to send highly trained and skilled deputies to calls involving individuals in crisis, to de-escalate and stabilize the situation, can dramatically reduce the likelihood of escalating to an arrest or use of force. Mental health calls can often be lengthy and require the knowledge and ability to navigate a complex system of services. COR deputies have the knowledge and ability to dedicate time to these calls, allowing other deputies to return to their primary duties of crime reduction. COR deputies respond to crisis calls with the primary mindset of determining the root cause of potentially criminal behaviors, connecting individuals with services, and diverting them from the criminal justice system. This reduces the burden on our hospitals, jails, courts, and criminal justice partners.

In September 2018, SBSO and BWell partnered to pilot the County's first law enforcement behavioral health COR. Working in coordination and partnership, the COR brings team members with expertise in behavioral health crisis situations to de-escalate individuals in crisis and improve an individual's outcome.

Performance Outcomes:

The following details the call disposition for calls involving CORs between January to December 2025:

- 186 – Safety planning
- 143 – Psychiatric holds (5150/5585)
- 527 – Voluntary mental health placement or connected with a provider for follow up
- 322 – Follow up on previous client contacts
- 34 – Arrest or citation
- 2 – Gun violence restraining orders (GVRO)

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

In the current Fiscal Year 2025-26, funding for the four (4) existing co-response teams comes from a variety of sources as follows:

- 1) One-time general fund for the Deputy and a combination of MHSA and Medi-Cal for the Clinician.
- 2) One-time general fund for the Deputy and a combination of MHSA and Medi-Cal for the Clinician.
- 3) CCP funded (Deputy and Clinician). The CCP vote will take place April 22, 2026.
- 4) CREDO Prop 47 grant – ended February 2026 (Deputy and Clinician)– Anticipated to use new BSCC grant funding gap for deputy only. An addendum to the BSCC grant is currently in progress. The Clinician is being funded by MHSA reserves after February 2026.

In the next Fiscal Year 2026-27, funding for the three (3) co-response teams has been identified. The Sheriff’s Office is currently working on a grant revision with BSCC to allow funding for deputy and clinician salaries. If the grant revision and CCP budget is approved as recommended, funding for three teams would be as follows:

- 1) BSCC Byrne SCIP grant (Deputy and Clinician) – South County.
- 2) BSCC Byrne SCIP grant (Deputy and Clinician) – South County.
- 3) CCP funded Co-Response team (Deputy and Clinician) – North County.
- 4) No funding identified for a fourth team. BWell could utilize BHSA fund balance for Clinician.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 2026-27	Total
General Fund		
State	1,347,134	1,347,134
Federal		
Fees		
Medi-Cal Patient Revenue (10% of BWell Staffing Cost)	60,503	60,503
Total	1,407,637	1,407,637

Staffing Impacts:

BWELL currently has three (3) FTE Practitioners assigned to Co-Response and one (1) FTE vacancy. If funding is not secured for any team in FY 2026-27, the vacant position will be unfunded, and any remaining staff will be reassigned to other programs within the department. The combined SBSO and BWell costs for one (1) Co-Response team are listed in the table below. SBSO is budgeting (3) FTE deputies for Co-Response teams in the FY 2026-27 budget. Should funding become available for an additional team, SBSO is confident they could redirect a deputy to support this work with minimal impacts to other patrol operations.

Behavioral Wellness	Quantity	FTE	Cost
Practitioner II		1	\$177,515 (Salary & Benefits)
Laptop, monitor, dock	1		\$2,200
Cell phone	1		\$1,200
Bwell Total			\$180,915
Sheriff	Quantity	FTE	Cost
Sheriff's Deputy II		1	\$273,702 (Salary & Benefits)
Cell phone	1		\$800
Duty weapon	1		\$700
Training	1		\$1,500
Motorpool	1		\$18,000
Sheriff Total			294,702
Combined Total	1		\$475,617

Special Instructions:

Please return one (1) Minute Order to M. Simon-Gersuk at msimongersuk@sbcbbwell.org and bwellcontractsstaff@sbcbbwell.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Behavioral Wellness & Sheriff’s Office Co-Response Team Board of Supervisors Presentation, April 7, 2026.

Contact Information:

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