



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

Department Name: Behavioral Wellness
Department No.: 043
For Agenda Of: December 7, 2021
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Pam Fisher, Psy.D., Acting Director
Director(s) Department of Behavioral Wellness, 805-681-5220
Contact Info: John Winckler, Division Chief of Clinical Operations,
(805) 681-5220
SUBJECT: Santa Maria Police Department – Behavioral Wellness Behavioral Health Co-Response Team (BHCRT) Memorandum of Understanding

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Approve and authorize the Chair to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Santa Maria Police Department for the creation and operation of a three-year pilot project for a Behavioral Health Co-Response Team commencing upon execution of both the County and the City of Santa Maria;
- B. Direct the Director of Behavioral Wellness or designee to report to the Board of Supervisors on the operation of the Mental Health Co-Response Team after the first three years of its operations; and
- C. Determine that these activities are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review per CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), as government fiscal activities that do not involve commitment to a specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the Board’s agenda to request approval to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Santa Maria Police Department (SMPD) for the creation and operation of a Behavioral Health Co-Response Team (BHCRT). BHCRTs are designed to improve collaboration between the mental health and law enforcement systems, with the goal of more effective handling of incidents involving law enforcement officers and persons in need of immediate mental health crisis and/or intervention. Approval of the recommended actions will allow BeWell to partner with the SMPD to expand the mobile crisis services provided to the City of Santa Maria residents.

Background:

BeWell expanded Crisis Services through a pilot project launched in October 2018 following extensive discussions and planning between Behavioral Wellness and the Sheriff’s Office. BeWell found the co-response pilot program with the Sheriff’s Office to be successful and expanded its services even further by entering into a co-response pilot program with the City of Santa Barbara Police Department. The Board approved of the pilot program with the City of Santa Barbara Police Department on May 21, 2019. This MOU creates a similar co-response pilot program with the City of Santa Maria Police Department.

The purpose of this MOU is to set forth the initial, generalized responsibilities of the BeWell and the SMPD as they relate to the creation and operation of a Behavioral Health Co-Response Team (BHCRT), which will be a strike team formed in partnership between BeWell and SMPD operated cooperatively. Working collaboratively, BeWell and SMPD will provide resources to address emerging and immediate mental health crises. MHCRTs are designed to improve collaboration between the mental health and law enforcement systems, with the goal of more effective handling of incidents involving law enforcement officers and persons in need of immediate mental health crisis and/or intervention. This goal will be reached by having mental health professionals from BeWell ride along with SMPD officers when responding to certain calls as designated by the BHCRT managers.

The mission of the BHCRT is to provide specialized support to community members of the City of Santa Maria experiencing mental health crisis. Interventions may include: assessment, referral to a mental health facility, de-escalation of situations or individuals, referral and linkage of individuals to needed services, and when appropriate, follow-up to ensure continued care and prevention. The goals of the BHCRT program are: to provide a safe, compassionate, and effective response to individuals with mental illness who come into contact with law enforcement; to prevent unnecessary hospitalization and/or incarceration; to increase public safety in potentially dangerous situations; and, to decrease arrests and prosecutions of mentally ill individuals. Through the BHCRT program, BeWell will provide real time mental health consultations to SMPD.

Performance Measure:

What will be achieved:

- **Reduction in wait times for crisis evaluations in the community and reduction in patrol officer time spent on crisis calls.**
 - With a clinician and officer paired up together responding to crisis calls, the clinician is able to be on scene quicker. This allows for quicker de-escalation of the scene leading to better outcomes for the individual in crisis.

- Once Co-Response team is on scene, patrol officers can leave the scene sooner and return to patrol. In traditional Mobile Crisis model, the patrol deputy needs to remain on scene until the crisis situation is completely resolved which could be hours.
- **Reduction in arrests of individual experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.**
 - With a CIT trained officer and mental health clinician on scene quickly, the likelihood of further escalation and need to arrest is reduced. Also, with a Co-Response team’s knowledge of the behavioral health system, they are able to quickly access appropriate resources that a patrol deputy may not have and would use jail for.
- **Reduction in use of force instances by SMPD.**
 - With a CIT trained officer and mental health clinician on scene quickly, the likelihood of further escalation and need to go “hands-on” is reduced.
- **Reduced use of Emergency Departments for individuals in a mental health or substance use crisis.**
 - With a Co-Response team’s knowledge of the behavioral health system, they are able to divert individuals from the ED and instead utilize resources like the Crisis Stabilization Unit, Stabilization/Sobering Centers, Crisis Clinics, etc.

The work will be done efficiently similar to our Sheriff Co-Response team, the SMPD Co-Response team will be notified of crisis calls through the dispatch system. As calls come into dispatch that appear to be mental health related, dispatch will notify the Co-Response team. The Co-Response teams are also continually monitoring radio traffic so can quickly divert to a crisis call if necessary. While not on active crisis calls, the Co-Responses teams will be engaging in proactive activities with individuals in the community who are at risk of a behavioral health crisis or doing follow-up visits with individuals recently in crisis to assist them in following safety plans and getting/staying connected to necessary services.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

None. **Fiscal Analysis:**

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Narrative:

No additional funding is committed for this MOU. Existing Santa Maria Mobile Crisis staff will participate on the Co-Response team.

Key Contract Risks:

The MOU contains mutual indemnification language and requires both the County and SMPD to maintain its own insurance coverage. The MOU may be terminated by either County or SMPD by providing 30 days’ written notice.

Special Instructions:

Please return one (1) copy of the Minute Order and one (1) copy of the executed signature page of the MOU to the Contracts Division at bwellcontractsstaff@santa-barbara.ca.us and to Melanie Johnson at: mejohanson@sbcbswell.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A: City of Santa Maria Behavioral Health Co-Response MOU – Behavioral Wellness

Authored by:

M. Johnson