



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  
**Department No.:** 043  
**Agenda Date:** July 1, 2025  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director: Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director,  
Behavioral Wellness  
Contact: Jamie Huthsing, LMFT, Assistant Director of Compliance and  
Quality Care Management, Behavioral Wellness  
Caitlin Lepore, PhD, LCW, Research and Evaluation Manager,  
Behavioral Wellness  
**SUBJECT:** Participation Agreement with California Mental Health Services Authority for  
Psychiatric Inpatient Concurrent Review Administrative and Fiscal Services for Fiscal  
Year 2025-26

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**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 Participation Agreement with California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) for Psychiatric Inpatient Concurrent Review (PICR) Program services (No. 12734-SB-PICR-25\_26) for a maximum contract amount not to exceed **\$139,440** for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025; and
- b) Determine that the above-recommended action is not a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(4), finding that the action is governmental funding mechanism and/or fiscal activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

**Summary Text:**

This item is on the agenda to request the Board of Supervisors to approve the execution of a Participation Agreement with CalMHSA for the Psychiatric Inpatient Concurrent Review (PICR) Program, to provide review of care and authorization services of members while actively admitted to psychiatric inpatient hospitals and psychiatric inpatient facilities within the County. This will ensure the member's level of care is appropriate and necessary for inpatient stay. The maximum agreement amount not to exceed \$139,440, for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

**Discussion:**

Renewal of the CalMHSA PICR Agreement for fiscal year 2025-26 will allow continued utilization of a consistent and efficient technology-assisted concurrent review process, ensuring compliance with California Department of Healthcare Services (DCSH) state and federal regulations.

Service fee per review rates have increased from the previous year (FY 2024-25) in light of an increase in staffing with Acentra Health, the CalMHSA contracted provider for concurrent review and authorization of inpatient psychiatric hospital services. Staffing increases are in response to higher volumes of PICR reviews for the County, in accordance with the State's timeliness expectations, to maintain quality levels and responsiveness to requests. While this service fee per review rate has increased, it remains below the industry standard rate.

**Background:**

In 2014, The Board of Supervisors approved the County's membership with CalMHSA, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) under Gov. Code §6500 et seq. that serves California counties as an independent administrative and fiscal intergovernmental structure for jointly developing, funding, and implementing mental health services and educational programs at the state, regional and local levels.

**PICR:** DHCS state and federal regulations require County Mental Health Plan (MHP) Specialty Mental Services (SMHS) and Substance Use Disorder Services (SUDS) authorization of specialty health services. To ensure compliance with Parity in Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services Final Rule (Parity Rule; Title 42 to the C.F.R §438.910), DHCS Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) 22-017 requires MHP's to operate a utilization management (UM) program that ensures beneficiaries have appropriate access to SMHS. MHP's are required to conduct concurrent review and authorization for all psychiatric inpatient hospital services and psychiatric health facility services. MHP's shall conduct concurrent review of treatment authorizations following the first day of admission.

CalMHSA has entered into a services agreement with Acentra Health (formerly Kepro/Keystone Peer Review Organization, Inc.), for concurrent review and authorization of inpatient psychiatric hospital services on behalf of multiple California County MHPs. By continuing to utilize Acentra's technology-assisted concurrent review process, CalMHSA will ensure a consistent and efficient review process across participating counties and will support MHP compliance with DHCS BHIN 22-017 and the Parity Rule.

On September 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved the execution of Participation Agreement No. 1158-PICR-2202-SB ("Participation Agreement"), with CalMHSA for this provision, for a maximum contract amount not to exceed \$178,483.20, for the period of September 13, 2022 through December 31, 2024. On April 8, 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved the execution of renewal Participation Agreement No. 11435-SB-PICR-24\_25, with CalMHSA as a renewal of services, for a maximum contract amount not to exceed \$37,184, for the period of April 8, 2025 through June 30, 2025.

**Performance Measure:**

CalMHSA facilitates the efficient use of resources for multiple public entities by providing group purchasing power, joint development of Requests for Proposal (RFPs) and contracts for services, reduced overhead costs through sharing of the expenses of administration and reporting, and shared research and strategies. CalMHSA's continued administration of this program will result in greater efficiency in the implementation of these mandated services for compliance with state and federal requirements. CalMHSA has provided and will continue to provide satisfactory reporting to ensure Behavioral Wellness (BWell) maintains compliance with the requirements. This includes meeting with BWell Quality Care Management every other month at a minimum, to review process for concurrent review and ensure timeliness of Treatment Authorization Requests (TARs) and all necessary documentation is captured in the Atrezzo Portal, and in compliance with psychiatric inpatient requirements. BWell audits a random sample of at least 10% of charts each month and timeliness of TARS completed by the contractor within 14 calendar days has greatly improved and has been in 100% compliance each month since January 2025.

**Contract Renewals:**

The County may withdraw from the PICR Program upon six months' written notice to CalMHSA as a measure of reducing contract risks. CalMHSA has provided satisfactory reporting to ensure BWell has complied with state and federal requirements.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes

**Fiscal Analysis:**

Funding for this agreement is budgeted to come from Federal Medi-Cal and State Mental Health Services Act sources.

Funding Source	FY 2025-26	Total
State (MHSA)	\$69,720	\$69,720
Federal (Medi-Cal)	\$69,720	\$69,720
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$139,440</b>	<b>\$139,440</b>

**Special Instructions:**

Please return one (1) Minute Order and one (1) complete copy of the Agreement to Sara Hernandez at [sahernandez@sbcbswell.org](mailto:sahernandez@sbcbswell.org) and the BWell Contracts Division at [bwellcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org](mailto:bwellcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org).

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** – CalMHSA PICR FY 2025-2026 Participation Agreement No. 12734-SB-PICR-25\_26

**Contact Information:**

Sara Hernandez

Contracts Analyst

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