

Public Comment

A-57



To: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

From: NAMI Santa Barbara County

Subject: County Contract with Marian Hospital for CSU Beds

Date: July 9, 2021

NAMI Santa Barbara County is in strong support of the proposed county contract with Marian Hospital for beds at its' Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU).

CSUs are 24/7 facilities for short-term care (up to 24 hrs.) for patients needing immediate attention and stabilization in a psychiatric medical crisis. They are specifically designed to divert patients from stress-inducing Emergency Dept. boarding, providing immediate care by trained professionals in a quiet, safe environment. For some, crisis symptoms can be alleviated in a relaxing setting where patients can then be referred to the next appropriate level of care, or safely returned home with a discharge plan.

Experience at other voluntary/involuntary CSUs throughout California and across the nation has shown the need for psychiatric hospital inpatient (PHF) beds can be reduced by 35% to 70% when CSU placement is available. This is the experience of the Contra Costa County CSU, serving 900-1200 patients per month, and the Santa Cruz County CSU, serving approx. 1600 patients per month. While a portion of patients need a PHF stay for stabilization, some can be adequately served by a CSU stay, with associated savings.

The growing number of involuntary psychiatric holds (5150s) at Marian and Cottage hospitals of persons deemed to be a danger to themselves and/or others; the increasing lengths of time of up to well over 100 hrs. some patients are waiting for inpatient bed placement; and the increase in the number of desperately ill patients on holds being released back to the community with no treatment placement whatsoever all highlight the critical need for these CSU beds for county clients.

We in NAMI believe the allocation of 2-3 beds falls short of the need; however, we applaud the proposal as a proof of concept. With enough capacity, we are told Marian CSU beds could also serve South County patients on involuntary holds.

Thank you so very much for your careful consideration.