



**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:** March 10, 2026  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:** N/A  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director: Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director, Behavioral Wellness  
Contact: Melissa Wilkins, MPH, CADC-II, CCPS, Branch Chief of Alcohol and Drug Programs, Behavioral Wellness  
Joshua Woody, LMFT, Branch Chief of Quality Care Management, Behavioral Wellness  
**SUBJECT:** **Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic Memorandum for Understanding for Traditional Health Care Practices for Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System for Fiscal Years 2024-2027**

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AN

**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, ratify, and authorize the Chair to execute the Memorandum of Understanding with **Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians on behalf of its Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic**, a federally recognized Tribal Nation, for the provision of traditional health care practices to eligible Tribal Medi-Cal members for a total maximum contract amount not to exceed **\$2,115,200**, inclusive of \$230,100 for FY 2024-25, \$936,100 for FY 2025-26 and \$949,000 for FY 2026-27, for the period of April 14, 2025, through December 31, 2026;
- b) Delegate to the Director of the Department of Behavioral Wellness or designee the authority to suspend, delay, or interrupt services, reallocate between funding sources and adjust service rates without increasing the contract maximum under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) per Section 19 and Section 25 of the MOU, and Exhibit B, Section I.B of the MOU, without requiring the Board of Supervisors' approval of an amendment to the MOU, subject to the Board of Supervisors' ability to rescind this delegated authority at any time; and

- c) 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)(4), finding that the actions are governmental funding mechanisms and/or fiscal activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

**Summary Text:**

This item is on the agenda to request approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic for the provision of Traditional Health Care Practices by Traditional Healers and/or Natural Helpers for eligible Medi-Cal members to support prevention, early intervention, and/or services for Tribal Members (American Indian/Alaska Natives only) with or at-risk of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) for FYs 2024-25 through 2026-27. The Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic MOU for Traditional Health Care Practices total maximum contract amount may not exceed \$2,115,200 during the term of FY 2024-27.

**Discussion:**

To be in compliance with Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) 25-036, Behavioral Wellness (BWell) has been actively working with the Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic (SYTHC) to support their implementation and provision of Traditional Health Care Practices with Traditional Healers and Natural Helper for their Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) members. As this program is designed, this treatment is solely managed and overseen by the Tribal Nations and Tribal service providers. BWell's role is to serve as the payment processor. Therefore, SYTHC will enter service delivery into our Electronic Health Records and BWell will, on behalf of SYTHC, bill accordingly and reimburse SYTHC. SYTHC is responsible for ensuring the satisfactory level of service for Tribal Members and its effectiveness. There are no reporting requirements to the County by SYTHC per the State issued BHIN.

**Background:**

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is a federally recognized sovereign Tribal Nation. As a sovereign Nation, the Tribe is an independent government entity with supreme authority over its territory and people. This status allows the Tribe to govern its population and territory, to enact and enforce laws without higher domestic authority, and to manage its affairs and establish its own legal system.

Santa Ynez Tribal Health Clinic (SYTHC), recognized by the Indian Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is located on the reservation of, and owned by, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, a federally recognized Tribe. The clinic provides a full array of health services to its members with a focus on Native American health and wellness

On October 28, 2025, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) issued BHIN 25-036 requiring DMC-ODS counties to provide coverage for Traditional Health Care Practices through approved Indian Health Care Providers (IHCPs) for members with SUDs from the effective date, March 21, 2025, through December 31, 2026. Traditional Health Care Practices are expected to improve access to culturally responsive care; support Indian Health Services facilities' operated by Tribes or Tribal organizations under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act; support these facilities' ability to serve their patients; maintain and sustain health; improve health outcomes and the quality and experience of care; and reduce existing disparities in access to care.

Traditional Health Care Practices included in this BHIN identified two new service types, Natural Helper and Traditional Healer services. Traditional Healer services may use an array of interventions including music therapy (such as traditional music and songs, dancing, drumming), spirituality (such

as ceremonies, rituals, herbal remedies) and other integrative approaches. Natural Helper services may assist with navigational support, psychosocial skill building, self-management, and trauma support to individuals that restore the health of eligible Medi-Cal members.

The IHCPs are required to coordinate with the County to ensure members have access to comprehensive American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) assessments to identify other SUD treatment needs; to ensure Tribal Members have access to medications for addiction treatment (MAT) services; and implement at least two evidenced-based treatment practices (motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, relapse prevention, trauma-informed treatment, or psycho-education). IHCPs seeking to provide these services were required to submit an application (opt-in) package to DHCS for their approval.

SYTHC submitted their opt-in package to DHCS and were approved to provide the new Traditional Health Care Practices effective April 14, 2025. Once SYTHC was approved, they were permitted to immediately begin offering Traditional Health Care Practices to their Tribal Members. Billing for these services needs to occur through Behavioral Wellness’s Electronic Health Record system within 90 days from the end of the month in which services were provided. BWell has been working closely with SYTHC to establish this MOU to support these programs and members. BWell is also actively working to provide ongoing support for members who seek additional treatment and service options through County DMC-ODS providers.

Approval of this MOU will provide the avenue to reimburse SYTHC for services provided to their members for the term of the MOU and will ensure the additional BWell services and culturally responsive care is offered and provided to American Indian and Alaska Native members.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

Budgeted: No

**SANTA YNEZ TRIBAL HEALTH CLINIC**

<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>FY 2024-25</b>	<b>FY 2025-26</b>	<b>FY 2026-27</b>	<b>Total</b>
General Fund				\$ -
State				\$ -
Federal				\$ -
Fees				\$ -
Other: Medi-Cal Patient Revenue	\$ 230,100	\$ 936,100	\$ 949,000	\$ 2,115,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 230,100</b>	<b>\$ 936,100</b>	<b>\$ 949,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,115,200</b>

The above-referenced MOU is funded with Federal funds. With the transition to CalAIM Payment Reform, the fee-for-service portion of the MOU will be funded with Medi-Cal Patient Revenue which primarily consists of Federal funds. The amount of Federal funds is contingent on the client’s aid code and the State issued rate for the service. Funding has been added to BWell's adopted budget for FY 2025-26. Funding will be included in BWell’s proposed budget for FY 2026-27 contingent on the Board of Supervisors’ approval.

**Special Instructions:**

Please return one (1) Minute Order and one (1) executed copy of the SYTHC Memorandum of Understanding to Marilyn Simon-Gersuk at [msimongersuk@sbcbswell.org](mailto:msimongersuk@sbcbswell.org), Sara Hernandez at [sahernandez@sbcbswell.org](mailto:sahernandez@sbcbswell.org), and to BWell Contracts at [bwelcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org](mailto:bwelcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org).

**Attachments:**

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**Attachment A – SYTHC MOU FY 2024-27**

**Contact Information:**

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