



**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: December 17, 2024
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: 4/5

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director(s): Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director, Department of Behavioral Wellness, 805-681-5220

Contact Info: Katie Cohen, Psy.D., LMFT, Assistant Director of Clinical Outpatient Operations Department of Behavioral Wellness, 805-681-5220

SUBJECT: Department of Behavioral Wellness Acceptance of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant for the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Program Expansion Project

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 Director of the Department of Behavioral Wellness or designee to submit and execute an application, including the required certifications and assurances, for grant funds from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services in support of the expansion of the Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Program (Program) in the amount of \$499,991 per year for budget period 9/30/24–9/29/2025 (year 1), and assuming funding is available and County is compliant with all requirements, \$499,991 for the period from 9/30/25 – 9/29/2026 (year 2), \$499,991 for the period from 9/30/26 – 9/29/2027 (year 3), and \$499,991 for the period from 9/30/27 – 9/29/2028 (year 4);
- b) Approve and authorize the Director of the Department of Behavioral Wellness or designee to accept the AOT Program Expansion Project grant award from SAMHSA (Award Number 1H79SM089819-01) in the amount of \$499,991 for year 1;
- c) Delegate to the Director of the Department of Behavioral Wellness or designee the authority to accept AOT Program Expansion Project grant awards from SAMHSA in the amount of \$499,991 per year for years 2 through 4 without having to return to the Board for approval, provided that the grant awards for years 2 through 4 are substantially based on the terms and conditions of the grant award for year 1 and concurrence is first obtained from Risk

Management, Auditor-Controller, and County Counsel, subject to the Board's authority to rescind this delegated authority at any time;

- d) Approve Budget Revision Request No. BJE – 0010167 for FY 2024-25 to increase Appropriations of \$374,993 in the Behavioral Wellness Department, Mental Health Services Act Fund, for Salaries and Benefits (\$289,640) and for Services and Supplies (\$85,353) funded by unanticipated revenue from the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) grant award; and
- e) Determine that the above actions are government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, and are therefore not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15378(b)(4) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Summary Text:

The above referenced items are on the agenda to request approval of the recommended actions, primarily in order that the Department of Behavioral Wellness be permitted to a) accept a grant from SAMHSA to expand the Department's Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Program, and b) increase Appropriations of \$374,993 in the Behavioral Wellness Department, Mental Health Services Act Fund, for Salaries and Benefits (\$289,640) and for Services and Supplies (\$85,353) funded by unanticipated revenue from the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) grant.

Background:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), awards grants that support behavioral health education, training and community programs to help address mental health and substance use conditions. As part of this initiative by SAMHSA, they award grants to implement Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) programs to support community-based treatment for individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) who meet state criteria for AOT. AOT is also known as involuntary outpatient commitment. It is defined as "medically prescribed mental health treatment that a patient receives while living in the community under the terms of a law authorizing a state or local court to order such treatment." Recipients of an award are expected to implement a multi-disciplinary AOT program, working with courts, community partners and other entities to support community-based treatment for adults with SMI who meet the criteria for AOT. With this funding, SAMHSA aims to support the implementation and evaluation of new AOT programs to reduce the incidence and duration of psychiatric hospitalization, homelessness, incarcerations, and interactions with the criminal justice system while improving the health and social outcomes of individuals with SMI.

The BWell Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program will focus on under and unserved individuals in Santa Barbara County who have a severe mental illness, are not engaged in behavioral health services, are significantly decompensating or deteriorating without intervention, have a history of not complying with treatment, and/or have a lack of insight into the need for treatment. In addition, the Program will support individuals who have failed to engage in services and are likely to relapse or be subject to a psychiatric hold without AOT intervention. BWell will integrate evidence-based practices such as Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Assertive Community Treatment and use the Drug Abuse Screening Test and Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test to determine levels of substance use and the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), a nine question self-report questionnaire, to assess risk of depressive symptoms.

In January of 2017, BWell launched a three-year AOT pilot program focused on south county while community-based organizations concentrated on west and north county. During the AOT program pilot phase, there were 118 referrals; 62% identified as male, 38% identified as female and most

referrals came from south county. Referred individuals were, on average, 39 years old (with a range from 18 to 81) and approximately 67% identified as White, 17% identified as Latino/Hispanic, 6% identified as African American/Black, 4% identified as Asian, and 6% identified as mixed race. The largest percentage (40%) of hospitalized clients lived in south county while 35% were from north county, and 16% from west county. Most hospitalized clients (57%) were adults aged 26-64 and 27% were transitional aged youth aged 16-25. This indicates the need for comparable outreach and engagement in north county compared to what has been developed for south county. Improving the outreach and engagement services in the north and west regions, and providing consistent services in all regions of our community will help us to reduce these numbers. As BWell adds AOT services for north and west county, BWell anticipates an increase in Latino/Hispanic and other minority population clients. BWell is the largest provider of Medi-Cal behavioral health services in the county. Therefore, its clients fall into the most at-risk, vulnerable population, including justice-involved individuals.

Goals and objectives of the Program include increasing outreach and engagement services, increasing voluntary acceptance of full-service partnership services, reducing crisis calls and contacts, reducing inpatient psychiatric hospitalization days, reducing incarceration, and reducing homelessness of AOT clients. Objectives include providing at least three engagement attempts per week for every AOT candidate/client, increasing the number of clients voluntarily accepting services by 25% with an annual increase of 5% throughout the funding period, reducing crisis calls and contacts by 15%, reducing incarceration by 15%, and reducing client homelessness by 10%. BWell expects to serve 25 individuals in the first year, 30 in the second, 30 in the third and 35 in year four for a total of 120 unique AOT clients.

When reviewing the data, including the success of the AOT pilot program, it is clear that expanding these services in north and west county is necessary to reach our goals of increasing engagement with individuals in the community and reducing the need for crisis services, hospitalizations, incarceration, and homelessness.

California Assembly Bill 1421 (known as "Laura's Law") established the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Demonstration Project Act of 2002, which provides court-ordered community treatment for individuals with a history of repeated hospitalization or incarceration, or a history of violent behavior to self or others. AOT permits California counties to utilize courts, probation, and mental health systems to address the needs of individuals unable to participate in community mental health treatment programs without supervision. AOT programs are based on the following criteria: The individual must be:

- 1) at least 18 years of age;
- 2) suffering from a serious mental disorder (defined by Welfare & Institutions Code 5600.3 (b)(2) and (3));
- 3) there has been a clinical determination that, in view of the person's treatment history and current behavior, at least one of the following is true:
 - a. The person is unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision and the person's condition is substantially deteriorating; or
 - b. the person is in need of assisted outpatient treatment in order to prevent a relapse or deterioration that would be likely to result in grave disability or serious harm to the person or to others, as defined in Section 5150;
- 4) Demonstrate a history of failing to comply with treatment and have had one of the following be true:
 - a. The person's mental illness has been a key factor in necessitating psychiatric hospitalization or mental health services while incarcerated at least twice within the

- last 36 months, not including the period immediately preceding the petition for AOT, or
- b. The person’s mental illness has resulted in one or more incidents of serious and violent behavior toward themselves or another in the last 48 months, not including the period immediately preceding the petition for AOT;
- 5) Have been offered the opportunity to participate in treatment but failed to engage;
- 6) Be an appropriate match for AOT, meaning that AOT offers the least restrictive placement needed to ensure recovery and stability; and
- 7) Be likely to benefit from AOT services.

By drawing or otherwise obtaining funds from the HHS Payment Management System, the County will acknowledge acceptance of the terms and conditions of the award and is then obligated to perform in accordance with the requirements of the award, including complying with the Fiscal Year 2024 Award Standard Terms (Standard Terms) and all other terms and conditions of the award. County is not obligated to execute any type of written funding agreement in order to receive the award and obtain award funds.

Performance Measure:

As a condition of the acceptance of the Grant, BWell will be required to submit a Mid-Year Programmatic Progress Report by 4/29/2025 and thereafter an Annual Programmatic Progress Report and an Annual Federal Financial Report by December 28th of each year during the term of the Grant. Such reports must include information requested by SAMHSA as set forth in the Notice of Award and in the Standard Terms, as well as the other provisions of the Grant and any reporting required by applicable law. In addition, BWell will collect and report data regarding the goals and objectives described above.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2*	Grant Year 3*	Grant Year 4*	Total One-Time Award
General Fund					
State					
Federal (Grant)	\$499,991	\$499,991	\$499,991	\$499,991	\$1,999,964
Fees					
Total	\$499,991	\$499,991	\$499,991	\$499,991	\$1,999,964

Narrative:

The total possible AOT grant award is for \$1,999,964 in Federal funding over a four-year period, \$499,991 per year. There is no General Fund Contribution for this program.

* If funding is available and County is compliant with all requirements.

Key Contract Risks:

As with any grant funded by federal sources, funding in the future is subject to availability of funds and satisfactory progress of the Program. In addition, BWell must continue to meet the eligibility and program requirements of the award as the funded Program is implemented. BWell must also comply with the performance goals, milestones, outcomes, and performance data collection requirements of the Grant. There are compliance risks in the event County fails to comply with all of the requirements of the Grant. Failure to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Grant may result in

the withholding of funds, disallowance of costs, suspension of payment of funds, the termination of the Grant award, or denial of future funding. In addition, as provided by the Grant and applicable law, the Grant funder may perform an administrative review of the County's financial management systems, policies, procedures and records and conduct audits. If a review or audit discloses financial management concerns, then Grant funding may be restricted per applicable law.

Special Instructions:

Please return one (1) Minute Order to Marilyn Simon-Gersuk at msimongersuk@sbcbswell.org and to the BWell Contracts Division at bwellcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Notice of Award

Attachment B: Fiscal Year 2024 Award Standard Terms

Attachment C: SAMHSA Grant Budget Revision Request (BJE- 0010167)

Attachment D: Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

Authored by:

Shannon Lewis