

<b>To:</b>	<b>BHS Contracted Service Providers</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>Behavioral Health Services</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>October 21, 2024</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Centralization of Countywide Homeless Outreach Workers (HOW)</b>

As part of the broader changes brought by Medi-Cal Transformation and the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), Behavioral Health Services (BHS) assessed key components and services within the delivery system to develop a streamlined approach. After a comprehensive evaluation of Homeless Outreach Workers (HOW) services, effective November 1, 2024, BHS will centralize countywide efforts related to the HOWs under a single contract. Our substance use outpatient system implemented a similar centralization in the fiscal year 2020-21 to develop a region-wide homeless outreach program.

The centralization of HOWs will provide a central point for homeless outreach, referrals, case management services, and coordination of short-term bridge housing (STBH) placements. It will also assist the County of San Diego Adult Outpatient Clinics (AOC) by engaging individuals experiencing homelessness and connecting them to the most appropriate service.

#### **How the New Structure Benefits the System of Care**

- The restructuring represents a significant step toward streamlining BHS’ homelessness response system.
- The restructuring will consolidate the HOW services under one contractor, strengthen the referral process, and improve coordination between homeless outreach efforts and the AOC.
- The restructuring will allow for improved infrastructure with a unified system for data collection, reporting, and oversight of the HOWs.
- The restructuring will provide technical assistance to all County AOCs.
- The contracted provider for homeless outreach services will oversee countywide HOW services, ensuring that outreach efforts are equitably distributed across the County’s regions.
- The centralized team will provide HOW support to the County AOCs for placing clinic clients into STBH.

#### **Short-Term Bridge Housing**

- Through the redesign, the AOC will connect the eligible individual to the contracted provider for homeless outreach services. The centralized team will coordinate placement with the STBH provider.
- The contracted provider for homeless outreach services will provide ongoing case management services for residents in the STBH program, and the AOC will provide treatment.

This restructuring initiative represents a significant advancement in our approach to addressing homelessness and mental health needs. By centralizing services and improving coordination, we're creating a more efficient and responsive system of care. We anticipate this new structure will lead to improved client outcomes and a more equitable distribution of services across the county.

Further details about the contracted provider for homeless outreach services will be shared with the system of care next month. Starting in November, the contracted provider will begin connecting with each AOC to establish communication and facilitate access to HOWs and STBH. The provider will designate a single point of contact to accept referrals.

#### **For More Information:**

- Contact your Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) or Betsy Knight, Behavioral Health Program Coordinator, [Elizabeth.Knight@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Knight@sdcounty.ca.gov)