



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



April 26, 2022

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DIRECTOR

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SUBJECT: Department of Health and Human Services recommends the creation of a Behavioral Health Advisory Board.

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive report from the Department of Health and Human Services on the creation of a new Behavioral Health Advisory Board.

SUMMARY: Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5604 requires that each county have a Mental Health Board. In recognition that substance use and mental health issues are often co-occurring and that integrated care yields improved outcomes, the California Departments of Alcohol and Drug Programs and Mental Health were integrated at the Statewide level in 2012 and the Marin County Divisions of Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Programs and Community Mental Health Services were integrated at the local level in 2012.

In Marin County, substance use and mental health issues are pervasive. In addition to rates of substance use among Marin youth exceeding statewide averages in most indicators, overdose deaths continue to be among the leading cause of accidental death in Marin. Marin youth also report concerning rates of emotional health issues, with 36% of 11th grade students reporting experiencing chronic sadness/hopelessness in the 12 months preceding the survey (Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, 2017-19). Among beneficiaries served in the County's publicly funded behavioral health system of care, more than 40% have a co-occurring mental health and substance use condition.

Although some individuals may not experience a co-occurring mental health and substance use issue, they are often interconnected, requiring a comprehensive approach. As such, the Department is proposing to create a new Behavioral Health Advisory Board by expanding the scope of the existing Mental Health Advisory Board. The Department's intention is to create a Behavioral Health Advisory Board that aligns with the mission and mandates of the Department's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS). Although collaboration will be encouraged to leverage experience and maximize impact, this new Board would be distinguished from the existing Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board as initiatives will more narrowly focus on programs, priorities and populations served through BHRS. Expanding the focus of the Mental Health

Board to include substance abuse issues is permitted under Welfare and Institutions Code section 5604.2 (a)(8).

The Department recommends and will provide support to the Mental Health Advisory Board to draft revised by-laws and identify a proposed name for a new Behavioral Health Advisory Board. The Department plans to come back to your Board in August 2022 to request approval of a new name and revised by-laws that reflect the transition of the Mental Health Advisory Board to a Behavioral Health Advisory Board.

EQUITY IMPACT: Mental health and substance issues affect all facets of the Marin community, though many indicators and adverse impacts are disproportionately experienced by communities of color, individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ and low-income residents. In terms of behavioral health treatment services, Marin County and the Department’s Division of BHRS are responsible for serving Marin’s safety net population, including Marin Medi-Cal beneficiaries and low-income uninsured community members. Within this population, communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by behavioral health and related issues, including higher rates of homelessness, unemployment and criminal justice involvement.

A Behavioral Health Advisory Board that reflects the broad and diverse perspectives of the Marin community and populations served in our publicly-supported system of care are critical to advancing the County’s equity goals and advising the Board and Department on strategies to positively impact mental health and substance use issues in our community.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

REVIEWED By:	County Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Department of Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	County Counsel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Respectfully submitted,

Benita McLarin
Director