



AGENDA ITEM 12

Action

Mental Health Wellness Act Peer Respite Project Outline

Item Goals

- Review and consideration of the outline for the Mental Health Wellness Act Peer Respite grant project.

Behavioral Health Landscape

- A peer respite is defined as a temporary residence offering peer support services provided 24/7 in a homelike setting, staffed and operated entirely by peers.
- Peers – those with lived experience with mental health and/or substance use challenges – bring one-of-a-kind knowledge that can help others manage their challenges.
- In California, peer respites are often formerly funded via the Mental Health Services Act through Community Services and Supports. With the new Behavioral Health Services Act, they can now be funded through Behavioral Health Services and Supports and Housing Interventions.
- The evidence base for peer respite is still forming, but there are promising outcomes:
 - Garden Gate Peer Respite in Modesto and 2nd Story Peer Respite in Aptos report that only 5% of guests exit to a higher level of care.
 - Peer respite stays at 2nd Story were associated with 70% lower odds of inpatient/emergency department use.
 - Satisfaction rates are high (91% at Insight Respite Center in Grass Valley, 98.5% at Garden Gate in Modesto).
 - At SHARE! in Los Angeles, 83% do not return to shelters or the street after two weeks, with 59% moving into SHARE! Collaborative Housing.
- Medi-Cal can now provide up to six months of transitional rent services for eligible members who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and transitioning out of other facilities, including institutional levels of care and transitional housing.

- In 2015, the California Health Facilities Financing Authority distributed \$3 million to increase the capacity of crisis mental health services operated by peers through its Peer Respite Care Grant Program.
- The Behavioral Health Community Investment Project, in combination with Proposition 1 funding, accounts for \$6.6 billion available to cities, counties, tribes, and nonprofits to expand and develop infrastructure, including respite facilities.
- California’s plan for implementing 988, the suicide and crisis lifeline, includes mobile crisis intervention with referral to BHCIP-funded infrastructure.

Relevant Commission Work

- California’s Mental Health Wellness Act (MHWA) is a grant program managed by the Commission that provides \$20 million each year to improve community response to people facing mental health crises.
- The MHWA provides grant funds to California counties to improve access and capacity for crisis services. This can include crisis intervention, stabilization, treatment, rehabilitative services and mobile crisis support teams. The Commission identified peer respite as one of the six priority MHWA funding areas. Other areas of MHWA focus include:
 - Crisis Stabilization (EmPATH)
 - Older adults (PEARLS and Age Wise)
 - Maternal Behavioral Health and Children Ages 0-5 (0-5 Grants)
 - Substance Use Disorder Pilot Program
 - Full Service Partnership Technical Assistance
- The Program Advisory Committee approved recommendation of this outline on December 15, 2025.

Proposed Motion

That the Commission approves the Peer Respite procurement outline plan not to exceed \$20 million and authorizes the Executive Director to conduct the competitive solicitation, issue a Notice of Intent to Award to the highest-ranked proposer(s), and execute all resulting contract and grant agreements in accordance with the approved outline plan and applicable procurement laws.