



**Date:** March 15, 2022

**To:** Honorable Mayor Garcia and Members of the City Council

**From:** Daryl Supernaw, Councilman, Fourth District  
Cindy Allen, Councilwoman, Second District  
Suzie Price, Councilwoman, Third District

**Subject:** **Support of the CARE (Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment) Court new policy framework to provide individuals with mental health and substance use disorders the care and services they need to get healthy.**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Request City Council support of the CARE Court framework that will create a new State policy for Mental health services — and request the City Manager to examine the feasibility of the local program being administered by the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (LBDHHS).

**DISCUSSION:**

CARE (Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment) Court, introduced by Governor Newsom on March 3, 2022, is a new policy framework to provide individuals with mental health and substance use disorders care and services. The proposal, which must be approved by the Legislature, would require counties to provide comprehensive treatment to the most severely impaired and untreated Californians and hold patients accountable to their treatment plan.

CARE Court does not wait until someone is hospitalized or arrested before providing treatment. CARE Court will provide an opportunity for a range of people, including family members, first responders, intervention teams, and mental health service providers, among others, to refer individuals suffering from a list of specific ailments, many of them unhoused, and get them into community-based services.

CARE Court offers court-ordered individualized interventions and services, stabilization medication, advanced mental health directives, and housing assistance — all while remaining community-based. Plans can be up to 12-24 months. In addition to their full clinical team, the client-centered approach also includes a public defender and a supporter to help individuals make self-directed care decisions.

The CARE Court framework was created using the evidence that many people can stabilize, begin healing, and exit homelessness in less restrictive, community-based care settings. The plan focuses on people with schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders, who may also have substance use challenges, and who lack medical decision-making capacity, and advances an upstream diversion from more restrictive conservatorships or incarceration.

The framework provides individuals with a clinically appropriate, community-based and court-ordered Care Plan consisting of culturally and linguistically competent county mental health and substance use disorder treatment services. These include short-term stabilization medications, wellness and recovery supports, and connection to social services, including a housing plan. Services are provided to the individual through an outpatient model while they live in the community.

In the event that a participant cannot successfully complete a Care Plan, the individual may be referred for a conservatorship, consistent with current law, with a presumption that no suitable alternatives to conservatorship are available.

All counties across the state will participate in CARE Court under the proposal. If local governments do not meet their specified duties under court-ordered Care Plans, the court will have the ability to order sanctions and, in extreme cases, appoint an agent to ensure services are provided.

CARE Court builds on Governor Newsom's \$14 billion multi-year investment to provide 55,000 new housing units and treatment slots and nearly \$10 billion annually in community behavioral health services. The Governor's approach focuses on quickly rehousing unsheltered individuals with behavioral health issues, all while new units come online, while also transforming Medi-Cal to provide more behavioral health services to people struggling the most.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

No Financial Management review was able to be conducted due to the urgency and time sensitivity of this item.

#### **EQUITY STATEMENT:**

Supporting this legislation, along with the potential for administration by LBDHHS, provides the framework for oversight by the Long Beach Office of Equity.