



County of Fresno

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Chairman
Buddy Mendes
District Four

Vice Chairman
Garry Bredefeld
District Two

Brian Pacheco
District One

Luis Chavez
District Three

Nathan Magsig
District Five

Bernice E. Seidel
Clerk

October 21, 2025

Susan Holt, Director of Behavioral Health,
County of Fresno
1925 E Dakota Ave,
Fresno, CA 93726

**SUPPORT FOR DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH *BEHAVIORAL HEALTH*
CONTINUUM INFRASTRUCTURE
PROGRAM (BHCIP) ROUND 2: UNMET NEEDS GRANT APPLICATION**

Dear Susan Holt,

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors is pleased to express strong support for the County of Fresno Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) in their submission of a proposal to the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) 2025 Round 2: Unmet Needs Grant. The Support and Short Stay (SASS) Project located at 5520 E. Hedges Ave Fresno, CA 93727, will include the renovation of an existing facility on the Olive campus and will be run as a Peer Respite.

In January 2022, the Department of Healthcare Services (DHCS) published a study titled Assessing the Continuum of Care for Behavioral Health Services in California, which highlighted significant gaps in the behavioral health care services available to individuals receiving care. Since the study's release, DBH has actively sought ways to narrow the gap in behavioral health services not only for the county but also regionally. DBH submitted applications to DHCS for BHCIP Rounds 1-5 and Bond BHCIP Round 1. DBH's current application for the Bond BHCIP 2025 Round 2 Unmet Needs grant will continue advancing its efforts to improve access to behavioral health services.

DBH is a Fresno County government agency responsible for ensuring services are provided to Medi-Cal members residing in Fresno County who may be experiencing mental health or substance use disorders and additionally provides services to many persons who are indigent/uninsured. DBH provides direct services to children, adults, and families experiencing behavioral health challenges at multiple facilities. DBH services through our system of care include assessment, therapy, medication, case management, crisis intervention, treatment, and other services.

The renovation of the SASS Peer Respite location will add ten (10) beds to the County's capacity to provide behavioral health services. It also enables the County to provide additional supportive short-stay services since there is an urgent need to provide more alternatives for shelter, as adults and older adults are more vulnerable and in need of additional resources for continued stabilization. The facility will serve a preventative role by proactively diverting individuals from inpatient, emergency departments, or mobile crisis encounters who do not meet criteria for a 5150 hold by providing a supportive short-stay peer-driven environment with the goal of reducing homelessness and reliance on more costly acute care settings. The facility will reduce wait times and ease pressure on emergency departments and inpatient psychiatric hospitals by adding beds and having 24/7 operations. Peer-driven services will include, but are not limited to, overnight stay accommodations, peer support, discharge planning, transportation, access to other clinical services including crisis interventions and assessments, and linkage to appropriate behavioral health programs and additional services and supports.

There currently is insufficient infrastructure at any facility in the county or neighboring counties to provide adequate and clinically appropriate services for this population, and there is a gap and unmet need for Peer Respite Services as an alternative to hospitalization. The short-stay 24/7 facility being co-located on a campus with the Urgent Care Wellness Center will streamline access to care and reduce barriers to engagement in treatment. This will allow the County to connect and link the persons served to services as soon as possible, especially those experiencing homelessness.

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support DBH in their submittal of a proposal for the construction of a SASS Peer Respite facility to add capacity and provide the full continuum of services outlined above, with an emphasis on Medi-Cal beneficiaries, which aligns with DBH's ongoing commitment to provide quality, culturally responsive behavioral health services to promote wellness, recovery, and resiliency for individuals and families in Fresno County.

Sincerely,



Ernest Buddy Mendes

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno