



Board Agenda Item 34

DATE: October 24, 2023
TO: Board of Supervisors
SUBMITTED BY: Susan L. Holt, Director, Department of Behavioral Health
SUBJECT: Termination of Handle with Care Plus Agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Authorize the Director of the Department of Behavioral Health to provide 30-days written notice to the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and Resiliency Center of Fresno to terminate Agreement No. 22-041 for a pilot mental health innovation project, pursuant to the Without Cause provision of the Agreement, to be effective November 30, 2023.

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. Approval of the recommended action will allow the County to terminate its agreement with the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and Resiliency Center of Fresno for the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation (INN) funded Handle with Care Plus pilot project as of November 30, 2023. Pursuant to Section 3.E, Without Cause, the Director of the Department of Behavioral Health will notify Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and Resiliency Center of Fresno of the County's intent to terminate the agreement Without Cause. The project has faced numerous challenges in meeting the scope of work requirements of this project. This item pertains to locations in Districts 2 and 3.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended action is not approved, the agreement would continue for the full three-year term and shall terminate June 30, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The recommended action will terminate the agreement. The three-year agreement has a maximum compensation of \$1,061,460. The amount estimated to be paid to contractor(s) for FY 2023-24 through November 2023 is \$162,136, allowing a cost savings of \$200,496. The unspent funds will return to MHSA INN funding to be used for other INN projects.

DISCUSSION:

On July 7, 2020, your Board approved moving forward with the development of the proposed MHSA INN funded project: Handle with Care Plus.

On September 21, 2021, your Board approved the three-year pilot of this mental health INN project to provide and evaluate the effectiveness of rapid response to traumatic experiences for youths 4 -11 years of age. This is a cross sector program that is designed to respond to children and families immediately after trauma or stressful life event. The focus is to provide early support, screen and assess children for early indicators

of mental health symptoms, empower the family with tools they need to cope and recover and connect children and families to any additional necessary resources.

The target population are the youth and families attending Heaton Elementary, Del Mar Elementary, Pyle Elementary, and Lowell Elementary. These school sites within Fresno Unified School District were selected via data analysis which identified high volumes of traumatic events and a need for resources for families in these areas.

Additionally, the innovative element of this project is the inclusion of two Parent Cafés which provide psychoeducational support and resources for the whole family so they can recover and normalize together. The Parent Cafés are intended to have a strength-based curriculum and framework that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety and help support resiliency in the community.

The Handle with Care Plus program has faced many challenges throughout its term. During its first year, the program had a difficult time reaching the parents or guardians of the youth referred. Contact is needed to accept services. In the first year of the program, a total of 96 Handle with Care notices were sent out to school staff. The second year had three notices sent out to school staff, and no notices have been sent in its current year. Contact was attempted for all the youth and families; however, due to incorrect contact information and non-response, the program was unsuccessful with screenings and linkages.

To date, there have only been six screenings and no assessments. In October 2022, the Resiliency Center of Fresno began facing challenges accessing the police call log to obtain the Handle with Care plus referrals. This challenge made it very difficult to carry out the Parent Café element as the attendees are intended to be the families of the referrals received. This led to very minimal participation and fewer Parent Café sessions.

Approval of the recommended action will terminate the agreement with the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and Resiliency Center of Fresno utilizing the Without Cause provision of the agreement effective November 30, 2023.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

The Behavioral Health Board was informed of the intent to terminate on the September 20, 2023 Behavioral Health Board meeting.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #20, February 1, 2022
BAI #29, September 21, 2021
BAI #31, July 7, 2020

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - FCSS Handle with Care Plus termination letter
On file with Clerk - RC Handle with Care Plus termination letter

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald W. Alexander, Jr