



Meeting Date: January 28, 2025

Agenda Item No. 19

Distribution Date: January 27, 2025

Batch No. 02

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January 27, 2025

Vice Chair Terra Lawson-Remer
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
County Administration Center
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 2101

Subject: Support for Item #19- Enhancing Behavioral Health Accessibility: Establishing New Partnerships Across the Continuum of Care

Dear Vice Chair Lawson-Remer and Supervisors,

On behalf of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and the over 2,200 members and 300,000 jobs we represent across the region, I am writing to express our support for Item 19, specifically recommendations 3-6. This item is an important step in expanding the accessibility of critical behavioral health services and strengthening our County's behavioral health continuum of care.

A shortage of psychiatric inpatient beds and a lack of beds in long-term board and care facilities have created a negative ripple effect throughout our region's healthcare system. Medi-Cal beneficiaries needing intensive care and substance use disorder treatment have not been able to get placed in appropriate levels of care, which has led to overcrowding in emergency departments, long wait-times for treatment, and has contributed to the worsening of our region's homelessness crisis.

This item seeks to create partnerships and explore funding strategies to tackle this shortage of behavioral health beds and outpatient behavioral health services. Creating innovative partnerships is key to making progress on this challenge, and we applaud the County for exploring what this solution could look like. As the largest local Chamber on the west coast, and a leading voice for the business community in our binational region, we understand the crucial need for expanded behavioral health facilities to care for our region's workers and residents. Our members are ready to be part of important conversations about strengthening our County's continuum of care and can provide their behavioral health expertise as discussions continue and partnerships get underway.

We appreciate Supervisor Montgomery-Steppe's introduction of this item and the Board of Supervisors' support of this initiative and look forward to continued partnership to improve behavioral health access and care in our region. If you have any questions, please contact Evan Strawn, Policy Advisor (estrawn@sdchamber.org).

Sincerely,



Jessica Anderson
Interim President & CEO
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

CC:

Hon. Joel Anderson, County Supervisor
Hon. Monica Montgomery Steppe, County Supervisor
Hon. Jim Desmond, County Supervisor