

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 26

**SUBJECT: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE AND HOMELESS
POPULATIONS: SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE RECOVERY
AND EMPOWERMENT (CARE) COURT (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

San Diego is facing a growing behavioral health and homelessness crisis. The most recent Point-in-Time Count in 2020 found at least 3,971 unsheltered people experiencing homelessness, some of whom have untreated behavioral health needs. The County of San Diego (County) is charged with providing care and support to our most vulnerable populations. To achieve the best possible health outcomes, people experiencing homelessness or a behavioral health crisis need coordinated care amongst various systems, community partners, and governmental agencies. We must find innovative and compassionate solutions to help those most urgently in need.

In March 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom introduced a policy framework that seeks to assist people living with untreated mental health and substance use disorders. The policy framework, the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court, is a court-ordered plan that connects a person with 24 months of case management and services. These services include a public defender and clinical support services, as well as a housing plan.

In San Diego County, the CARE Court framework could play an important role in helping people with very specific needs access treatment. However, successful implementation of CARE Court is dependent upon building and scaling out a new system of care, workforce, and infrastructure that aligns with the proposed framework. The responsibility for CARE Court, as currently envisioned, places these responsibilities with counties, however, collaboration, resources and support on the part of all levels of government are required.

Today's action would direct the County to support the CARE Court framework while also advocating for the necessary funding, workforce development assistance, adequate time for implementation, and cooperation at the local municipal level to provide the necessary housing to ensure the successful implementation of the CARE Court program.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIR NATHAN FLETCHER AND VICE-CHAIR NORA VARGAS

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, consistent with Board Policy M-2, to advocate in support of the CARE Court framework, in the form of Senate Bill 1338 or another legislative vehicle, through a letter of support to the Governor and through advocacy with State regulatory agencies, the State budget process, and other legislative efforts, while advocating for dedicated and ongoing funding, clearly defined eligibility standards for participants, adequate time for implementation with a delay in the court's ability to sanction, and cooperation at the State and municipal level to build the necessary housing to ensure the successful implementation of the CARE Court framework while expressing desire to participate in any future pilot programs related to CARE Court and ensuring necessary funding for such pilot programs.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County is committed to finding equitable solutions to address the ongoing behavioral health and homelessness crisis. CARE Court is a proposed framework to deliver mental health services and other support to the most severely impaired Californians who too often suffer from homelessness or incarceration without the treatment they need. The framework strives to provide individuals with a clinically appropriate, community-based set of services and supports that are culturally and linguistically competent. Successful implementation of this program is predicated on both sufficient funding and establishing a framework that provides the necessary supports for the participants. By advocating for policy changes that can make a CARE Court program successful, the County will improve the outcomes and address the needs of a vulnerable and underserved population who have a serious mental illness.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. There may be future fiscal impacts associated with future recommendations and implementation of the CARE Court. Any such recommendations would return to the Board for approval as necessary with identified costs and resource needs. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Fletcher, seconded by Supervisor Vargas, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended.

AYES: Vargas, Lawson-Remer, Fletcher, Desmond

ABSENT: Anderson

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter

