

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 28

SUBJECT: RECEIVE THE UPDATE ON CREATING A CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND TRANSITION AGE YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTINUUM FRAMEWORK FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY; AUTHORIZE COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENTS FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES; DIRECT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DATA-SHARING AGREEMENTS AMONG COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO DEPARTMENTS; AND DIRECT FORMAL DISCUSSION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF DATA-SHARING AGREEMENTS AMONG LOCAL HOSPITALS AND MANAGED CARE PLANS TO IMPROVE CARE COORDINATION FOR YOUTH IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

To address the serious public health concern of declining mental health among our youth, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved action on September 24, 2024 (12) to create a behavioral health continuum framework for children, youth, and transition age youth (TAY) focused on promoting resiliency and well-being amidst increasing challenges of anxiety, depression, bullying, suicide risk, and social media influences. Using national and local data, including input from key stakeholders, this framework seeks to expand access, improve engagement, and achieve ideal capacity across the youth continuum of care. As part of this action, the Board directed staff to report back in six months with an outline of strategies, and a return in 18 months with a final report to include prioritized recommendations for action and investment, contingent upon the approval of resourcing and funding.

The County of San Diego (County) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) presented a memorandum to the Board on March 24, 2025, outlining strategies tailored to the distinct needs of youth and introduced the Youth Optimal Care Pathways (Youth OCP) model which informs future capacity needed to best serve children, youth, and TAY. Informed by robust stakeholder engagement, the Youth OCP model reflects community priorities and aligns with recent policy changes under the Behavioral Health Services Act.

Today's update includes the findings from Youth OCP analytic modeling; immediate capacity building efforts currently underway to enhance and expand the continuum of services; and recommended strategies to expand access and improve engagement through family systems, school-based partnerships, and health care integration. In alignment with the school-based partnership priorities, today's item also includes a request to issue competitive procurements for the School-Based Incredible Years and School-Based Skill Building Programs which provide early intervention and treatment services for youth.

Additionally, today's item includes requests for authorization to update existing or establish new data-sharing agreements among County departments, as well as formal discussions with hospitals and Managed Care Plans to establish new data-sharing agreements, where necessary and legally permissible, that enhance care coordination for youth beneficiaries. These actions seek to improve care coordination across medical, non-specialty, and specialty behavioral health to support access to the least intensive level of care that meets clinical need and timely step-down, follow up, and ongoing engagement for youth beneficiaries and their families.

Today's item supports the County vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically the communities and populations that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by enhancing the behavioral health continuum of care for children, youth, and TAY throughout San Diego County.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Receive the 18-month update on creating a children, youth, and transition age youth behavioral health continuum framework for San Diego County.
2. In accordance with Section 401, Article XXIII of the County Administrative Code and Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, authorize the Director, Department of Purchasing and Contracting, to issue Competitive Procurements for each of the behavioral health services listed below, and upon successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award contracts for an Initial Term of up to one year, with four 1-year Options, and up to an additional six months, if needed; and to amend the contracts to reflect changes in program, funding or service requirements, subject to the availability of funds and the approval of the Director, Behavioral Health Services.
 - a. School-Based Incredible Years
 - b. School-Based Skill Building
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to update and/or establish data-sharing agreements between County of San Diego departments, including Behavioral Health Services, Child and Family Well-Being, Probation, and others, where necessary and legally permissible, to support data sharing practices that enhance care coordination for youth beneficiaries.
4. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to authorize formal discussions with local hospitals and Managed Care Plans to establish data-sharing agreements that aim to improve coordination of care across medical, non-specialty, and specialty behavioral health to support access to the least intensive level of care that meets clinical need and timely step-down, follow up, and ongoing engagement for youth beneficiaries and their families.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County of San Diego (County) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is the delivery system for mental health and substance use care for Medi-Cal eligible residents, aiming to ensure services are accessible, culturally responsive, aligned with the needs of diverse populations, and equitably distributed to reach those most in need. It is estimated that 373,500 San Diegans aged 0-25 were enrolled in Medi-Cal as of September 2025. Expanding capacity and access to client-centered, evidence-based care is a critical step in addressing the behavioral health crisis among our youth.

Recent data highlights the urgency of expanding capacity and access to client-centered, evidence-based care. According to the California Department of Health Care Access and Information, the rate of emergency department encounters for nonfatal self-harm or suicide attempt among individuals aged 10-24 in San Diego County increased by 12% between 2019 and 2023. This trend reflects growing behavioral health needs among youth and young adults.

National data highlight gaps that require proactive measures to ensure equity across demographic groups. The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that in 2023, 20% of high school students seriously considered attempting suicide. In addition, 9% of high school students attempted suicide with differences by race/ethnicity: American Indian or Alaska Native students reported the highest levels of suicidal ideation (25%), while Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students reported the highest prevalence of suicide attempts (15%). Additionally, LGBTQ+ high school students reported markedly higher rates of both suicidal ideation (41%) and suicide attempts (20%) compared with cisgender and heterosexual students (13% and 6%, respectively). These findings align with broader YRBS indicators showing higher levels of persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness and poor mental health among female students and LGBTQ+ youth.

Together, these data underscore the importance of equity-driven strategies that prioritize populations at highest risk. Expanding school-based prevention and skill-building programs, improving culturally responsive crisis response coordination, and strengthening transitions to community-based care are critical steps toward reducing disparities and improving behavioral health outcomes for all San Diego County youth.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's item supports the County of San Diego (County) Sustainability Goal #2 to provide just and equitable access to County services. Expanding capacity and access to client-centered, evidence-based behavioral health services for children, youth, and young adults promotes an integrated system of care that prioritizes cultural responsiveness and ensures equitable access to care. This item also supports Sustainability Goal #4 to protect the health and well-being of everyone in the region by shifting focus toward prevention and early intervention, reducing the burden on emergency services.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Years 2025-27 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency. If approved, this request will result in no additional costs and revenue in Fiscal Year 2025-26 and approximately \$10,214,868 in costs and revenue in Fiscal Year 2026-27. The funding source is Short-Doyle Medi-Cal and Realignment. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

Noting for the record this item was heard on March 25, 2026; ON MOTION of Supervisor Lawson-Remer, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended.

AYES: Aguirre, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, 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