

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



**ITEM: 3.24
(ID # 15196)**

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, May 25, 2021

FROM : RUHS-BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

SUBJECT: RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (RUHS-BH): Approve and Opt-in to the Implementation of Court-Ordered Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program, Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 5345 et. Seq. (Colloquially known as “Laura’s Law”), All Districts. [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve and Opt-in to the Implementation of Court-Ordered Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program, Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 5345 et. Seq. (colloquially known as “Laura’s Law”).


ACTION:


Matthew Chang, Director 5/12/2021

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Jeffries, seconded by Supervisor Perez and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez, and Hewitt
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: May 25, 2021
xc: RUHS-BH

Kecia R. Harper
Clerk of the Board
By 
Deputy

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FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	\$0	\$0	\$ 0	\$0
NET COUNTY COST	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A			Budget Adjustment: No	
			For Fiscal Year: 2020/21	

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5345 et seq, (colloquially known as Laura's Law), became effective in January 2003, through the enactment of AB 1421 (2002). When AB 1421 was enacted, the adoption of Laura's Law was optional for each county, and required Board of Supervisor action for implementation, however in 2020, AB 1976 was enacted to make Laura's Law mandatory unless a county affirmatively elects to opt out. The new WIC 5349 takes effect July 1, 2021 and RUHS-BH would like the County to implement the Laura's Law program by opting-in prior to June 30, 2021.

The purpose of Laura's Law was to create an Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program that provides court-ordered treatment for persons with severe mental illness who meet the following certain criteria: 1) the person must be at least 18 years of age and suffering from a mental illness described in WIC 5600.3(b)(2) and (b)(3); 2) the person has a clinical determination that the person is unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision; and 3) the person has a history of non-compliance with treatment of the mental illness. This requires at least one of two other factors to be true – (i) at least twice in a 36-month period of hospitalization or receipt of services in a correctional setting, or (ii) resulted in at least one act of serious and violent behavior in a specified time period.

Implementation of a Laura's Law program may help alleviate the backlog in mental health court, and may lessen the number of people in state hospitals and other inpatient treatment programs because a less restrictive means of care would now be available with a similar level of oversight. Additionally, the program may act as a last step for people prior to entering into conservatorship.

Under a Laura's Law program, an individual can be referred to Laura's Law by an immediate family member, an adult residing with the individual, a Director/Administrator of a treating agency, organization, facility or hospital, a treating licensed mental health professional, or a peace officer, parole or probation officer supervising the client. The

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individual will be screened by the Laura's Law RUHS-BH AOT (LL AOT) team, which includes a group of the following professionals: Behavioral Health Specialists, Substance Use Specialists, Peer Support Specialists, Licensed Mastered Level Clinicians, Licensed Psychologist, and a Psychiatrist. The LL AOT team will conduct all outreach, screening, and linkage services if agreed to by consumer. A Psychologist will conduct clinical assessments prior to petition being filed to ensure need for LL AOT and will testify to findings and treatment recommendations in court. The Behavioral Health Director, through County Counsel, would file a petition for each person sought to be treated under this program. A petition will only be filed if criteria can be proven by clear and convincing evidence. The client will have a right to be represented by an attorney. As of today, the client's counsel is contemplated to be the Public Defender, but could also be a contracted law firm.

Assuming the Court grants the petition, AOT may commence. RUHS-BH would be required to handle the actual care of the clients in the outpatient program, either directly or through third party providers. These services would include all-encompassing, intensive, wrap-around, Full Service Partnership programs. These programs use a "whatever it takes" approach to help individuals on their path to recovery and wellness, while embracing each client's individual needs. These services are recovery-focused, strength-based services that include but are not limited to co-occurring disorder treatment, 24/7 on-call staff response, field-based services, peer-run activities, educational/vocational assistance, and housing specialists. Staff will also assist clients with benefits (Social Security, Medi-Cal), life skills trainings and community integration. Many of the individuals eligible for this program have at some point experienced mental health treatment that involved locked facilities or hospitalizations. With AOT, clients will have the opportunity to adjust to forming relationships with these support staff and receiving intensive services outside of a locked setting.

Data indicates AOT and program support are contributing factors in helping clients avoid or reduce hospitalization, homelessness, and incarceration. The highlights below reflect outcomes for 228 individuals from 13 counties that reported Laura's Law court-involved client data, provided by the Department of Healthcare Services, during the reporting period of May 2018 – April 2019:

- Homelessness decreased by a 30 percent change;
- Hospitalization decreased by a 33 percent change;
- Contact with law enforcement decreased by a 43 percent change;
- Some individuals were able to secure employment or obtain volunteer positions;
- Victimization was reduced by an 85 percent change;
- Violent behavior decreased by a 64 percent change;

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- Clients presenting with a co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder reduced substance use by a 34 percent change;
- Most counties reported improvements in clients social functioning and independent living skills; and,
- Client and family satisfaction surveys indicated satisfaction with AOT services.

Additional Fiscal Information

There is sufficient funding in the RUHS-BH budget for the cost of treatment for these clients, including the counsel fees associated with filing the petition. This does not include the costs for legal services to the Public Defender or contract firm. The Executive Office will work with the Public Defender's office to identify funding for the needed staffing support. Funding for attorney representation for the client must be for an entirely new program, as it is not feasible to reduce other programs in order to fund the implementation of the Laura's Law program.

1 Board of Supervisors

County of Riverside

2 RESOLUTION NO 2021-112

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4 RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE FOR
5 AUTHORIZATON TO OPT-IN TO THE LAURA'S LAW PROGRAM

6
7 **WHEREAS**, Welfare and Institutions Code section 5345 et seq. (colloquially known as Laura's
8 Law) was effective on January 1, 2003 and created a framework for Assisted Outpatient Treatment
9 (AOT); and,

10 **WHEREAS**, AOT is court-ordered outpatient therapy that is designed to treat adults suffering from
11 severe mental illnesses and who are unlikely to survive safely in the community and who have a history
12 of non-compliance with treatment; and,

13 **WHEREAS**, Implementation of Laura's Law will provide obtain placement assistance, treatment,
14 and ongoing support to qualifying individuals through a Full Service Partnership program; and,

15 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 5349(a), the county is required to
16 opt-in to providing Laura's Law services via authorization through a resolution approved by the Board
17 of Supervisors.

18 **BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED** by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside,
19 State of California, in regular session assembled on May 25, 2021, that Riverside University Health
20 System – Behavioral Health is authorized to begin services pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code
21 section 5345 et seq. (also known as Laura's Law).

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FORM APPROVED COUNTY COUNSEL 5/19/20
BY: GREGORY P. PRIAMOS

2 **RESOLUTION 2021-112**

3 **A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF**
4 **RIVERSIDE FOR AUTHORIZATION TO OPT-IN TO THE LAURA'S LAW PROGRAM**

5 ADOPTED by Riverside County Board of Supervisors on May 25, 2021.

6 ROLL CALL:

7 Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Hewitt
8 Nays: None
9 Absent: None

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12 The foregoing is certified to be a true copy of a resolution duly adopted by said Board of
Supervisors on the date therein set forth.

13 KECIA R. HARPER, Clerk of said Board

14 By: 

15 Deputy

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