

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



ITEM: 3.3
(ID # 21831)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, May 02, 2023

FROM : EXECUTIVE OFFICE:

SUBJECT: Executive Office: Support Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program Related Legislation

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Authorize the Board Chair to sign letters of support for proposed legislation that allows for counties to successfully implement CARE Court, including Senate Bill 21 (Umberg) and Senate Bill 22 (Umberg).

ACTION: Policy

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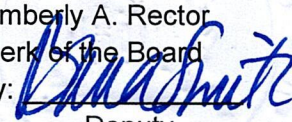


Jeff Van Wageningen, County Executive Officer 4/27/2023

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: May 2, 2023
xc: E.O.

Kimberly A. Rector
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

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BACKGROUND:

Summary

Last year, Senate Bill 1338 (Umberg and Eggman, Chapter 319, Statutes of 2022) enacted the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program. The goal of CARE Court is to help connect individuals in crisis with a court-ordered care plan.

According to the California Department of Health Care Services, CARE Court is an upstream diversion program aimed at preventing more restrictive conservatorships or incarceration, focused on people with schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders who lack medical decision-making capacity. The framework provides individuals with a clinically appropriate, community-based set of services and supports that are culturally and linguistically competent, which includes short-term stabilization medications, wellness and recovery supports, connection to social services, and a housing plan. By focusing on a holistic, person-centered approach, CARE Court aims to break the cycle of homelessness and incarceration for these individuals and promote long-term recovery through a court process. This approach seeks to create a safer and healthier community for all residents.

Riverside County was selected to be among the first cohort of counties to implement CARE Court including Glenn, Orange, San Diego, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne, and the City and County of San Francisco. (The County of Los Angeles was added several months later.) The first cohort will begin no later than October 1, 2023. The second cohort of counties, representing the remaining population of the state, is required to begin implementing CARE Court no later than December 1, 2024, unless a county is provided additional time.

The successful implementation of CARE Court in Riverside County relies on a strong collaboration between stakeholders. These partnerships are essential to ensure that individuals receive the necessary support and services throughout the entire process. Key partners serving as full members or ad hoc members of the CARE Court Steering Committee include:

- Riverside County Superior Court: The court plays a crucial role in overseeing the CARE Court process, from ordering the Care Plan to monitoring the individual's progress and encouraging compliance with the program's requirements.
- RUHS Behavioral Health: Mental health and substance use disorder professionals are essential in conducting assessments, developing individualized Care Plans, and providing the necessary treatment and support services.
- Housing and Workforce Solutions: Housing experts help connect individuals with stable and affordable housing options, which is a critical component of promoting long-term recovery.
- Law Offices of the Public Defender: Attorneys play a role in advocating for the individuals in the CARE Court program, ensuring their rights are protected, and helping them navigate the legal process. The court will determine if an individual is

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found to be eligible for Care Court. At that time, legal counsel will be provided to represent the individual.

- Hospitals: Hospitals and other medical facilities are important partners in providing acute care for individuals in crisis, as well as ongoing medical care and stabilization medications as required by the Care Plan.
- Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services Providers: Local law enforcement agencies and emergency medical services providers work collaboratively with the CARE Court program to identify eligible individuals, connect them with appropriate services, and support their progress throughout the program.
- Cities: Municipalities and local government agencies are vital in supporting the implementation of CARE Court by providing resources, coordinating services, and facilitating community transition for individuals in the program.

By working together, these stakeholders hope to break the cycle of homelessness and incarceration, promote long-term recovery, and foster safer and healthier communities in Riverside County and beyond.

One of the functions of the Steering Committee, which has been meeting since September of last year, is to identify opportunities for new legislation and administrative rules that will make the implementation of CARE Court more effective. We are currently working with the County's lobbyists, other Cohort One counties, the Governor's Administration, the Judicial Council of California, the California State Association of Counties, the Urban Counties of California, the California Behavioral Health Directors Association, and others to make the necessary changes to state law.

One example involves the opportunity to use remote civil proceedings for CARE Court hearings. The Steering Committee has reached the conclusion that the likelihood of a successful outcome increases if we can bring the court process to a participant, rather than trying to bring every participant to court. Additionally, the stakeholders believe that this model allows for a more efficient use of limited resources. Existing law authorizes a party to appear remotely and a court to conduct conferences, hearings, proceedings, and trials in civil cases, in whole or in part, using remote technology. However, the authorization of remote proceedings is set to expire on June 30, 2023. Senate Bill 21 (Umberg) and Senate Bill 22 (Umberg) would extend authorization until January 1, 2026.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

Taking an active role in shaping legislation in support of CARE Court creates an opportunity to make the program more successful, to the benefit of all residents and businesses

