

Health Department CBAC

TO: Chair Jessica Vega Pederson and Board of County Commissioners (8) pages

FROM: Health Department Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)

DATE: March 23, 2023

SUBJECT: HD Community Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Health Department Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) developed a Values Statement that continues to guide the work of our committee. These guiding principles affirm that:

- We are transformative leaders
- We offer expert knowledge
- We uphold racial justice
- We operate with dignity and respect
- We believe in inter-cultural intelligence
- We hold ethics at the core

With 16 out-of-target offers submitted by the Department in their February transmittal letter, this committee sends forward rankings of all offers – from highest priority to lowest. Seven of these offers are funded with federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars. Two are one-time only requests and are prioritized separately from ongoing requests. This is a much smaller package than the committee reviewed for Fiscal Year (FY) 23, with less than half of program offers considered and a 75% reduction in total proposed funding for the current year.

In developing our recommendations, the committee looked for opportunities to utilize one-time state and federal funding to make long-term infrastructure investments and to support direct service work that would address the disproportionate health outcomes in our underserved communities.

As you will note in our offer rationale below, your CBAC committee sends forward these recommendations with the following high-level priorities:

- Continue to support what we hope are transformational long-term investments in the Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC), recognizing the essential role the

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Health Department plays in addressing broader behavioral health and substance use challenges facing so many across our community. BHRC funding was our top priority for FY23 and the Day Center offer is our top recommendation this year.

- Respond to the unique challenges of the population served in Corrections Health to address both significant workforce and staffing challenges for the division in recent years along with increased client acuity and to build capacity for the division to deliver culturally-appropriate care.
- Utilize ARPA funds in two key areas: to make significant investments in behavioral health in three program offers that provide culturally-specific, peer-led services for historically excluded populations, and for two program offers that address the record recent gun violence that has disproportionately affected our African-America, Latinx, and African refugee communities.
- Support the workforce challenges facing the department, especially recruitment and retention in the wake of several years of intense COVID-19 response work, and boost department capacity to support CBO organizations contracting with the department to provide culturally-relevant services.

PROCESS -

Our seven-member committee makeup was unchanged from FY23. This allowed us to reflect as a group during the current year on what processes we wanted to modify as we developed our FY24 recommendations. We once again appreciated the opportunity to hear from a variety of division directors throughout the year. Those conversations focused on the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery and department workforce, the effectiveness of new programs funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars and what a transition from COVID-19 response to core service delivery would entail over the next year.

Health Department presenters:

- *Ebony Clarke (former Health Department Director)*
- *Dr. Jennifer Vines (Health Officer)*
- *Myque Obiero, Michael Seale, and Rachael Lee (Corrections Health)*
- *Julie Dodge (Behavioral Health)*
- *Valdez Bravo (Operations Division)*
- *Adrienne Daniels (Integrated Clinical Services)*

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES -

As the department continues to shift away from COVID response and back to core service delivery in this proposed FY24 budget, the committee recognizes that significant health disparities existed in our community prior to the pandemic, and many of those disparities have deepened over the past three years. These offers represents a significant step towards expanding access to care and services in BIPOC communities through external program investments and direct client

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assistance. By investing in culturally specific services and addressing the unique needs of marginalized communities, these programmatic offers will help improve the health outcomes of those who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. COVID-19 has had a profound impact on communities around the world, and the Multnomah County residents are no exception. As the pandemic continues, the behavioral health acuity rates have remained high, resulting in an ongoing need for mental health and addiction services and resources. The pandemic has exacerbated stressors associated with isolation, economic instability, and other factors, leading to increased rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and violence. This initiative is critical in addressing these pressing concerns and expanding access to care and services in BIPOC communities through external program investments and direct client assistance.

We recommend that the department continue to prioritize culturally-responsive and appropriate services, both internally and in collaboration with community partners.

The department's role in addressing increasing gun violence became an important topic of discussion for the committee. Since 2019, the dramatic rise in gun violence continues and its disproportionate impact on communities of color is an issue we urge the department to continue to support.

Lastly, we have heard repeatedly from division directors about workforce shifts over the past few years that have significantly impacted department capacity. With a significant number of vacant and un or under-filled positions, the committee supports investing in department capacity to fill key vacancies and retain highly-qualified staff.

BUDGET FEEDBACK -

(See priorities in Executive Summary above)

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) RAMP DOWN -

The CBAC did not have discussions regarding ARP ramp down.

PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS -

Our specific recommendations are in priority order, with the first offer being the most prioritized (one time only offers following):

1) 40104C Behavior Health Resource Center (BHRC) Day Center CGF Support

The BHRC holds so much potential for people experiencing crises in Multnomah County. It is vital that we fully fund the program to set it up for success. It is difficult to overstate how meaningful it is to have access to showers, laundry, and bathrooms (i.e., basic facilities) 15 hours per day in downtown Portland. It is the difference between making a job interview, meeting with a social worker, getting medications refilled. Members of our committee include behavioral health professionals with knowledge in this area and we strongly encourage the county to fully fund the ongoing operations of the BHRC.

2) 40059B Correction Health Behavioral Health Nurse Practitioner Restoration

This initiative's core responsibility is to provide constitutional and community-level healthcare to individuals in custody, with a focus on addressing the groups disparately impacted. The recruitment and hiring practices have been refined to promote a workforce that resembles the demographics of the population they serve, and policies, procedures, and practices are evaluated to ensure an equity approach. This initiative is necessary to ensure that persons incarcerated receive necessary clinical care, which is their right as they are unable to seek care on their own.

3) 40107 Corrections Health Staff Augmentation

This is a crucial initiative that deserves support. The current staffing issues and burnout have led to increased sick calls, vacation requests, and mandates, exacerbating the problem. By increasing the number of nurses regularly scheduled to each shift, the proposal aims to address the staffing shortages and reduce the need for overtime, temporary, and agency staffing expenses. This also aims to improve patient care, recruitment, and retention by reducing staff burnout and maintaining appropriate access to care, which is a mandated right for incarcerated individuals under the 4th, 8th, and 14th amendments. Due to the disproportionate impact on the BIPOC community, who are overrepresented in the incarcerated population in Multnomah County, this would meet the healthcare needs of incarcerated individuals while reducing staffing-related expenses and increasing staff retention.

4) 40199W APR - Old Town Inreach

Personal and professional experience coupled with outcome evidence demonstrates mental health crises can be avoided with early intervention and access to resources. Crisis response services such as police, Portland Street Response, Project Respond, or ambulances are expensive. Emergency departments and hospitalization are expensive. Providing peer support teams is not only potentially less traumatic for everyone involved, it is also much cheaper and leads to better

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mental health outcomes. We strongly encourage the county to invest in meaningful and effective upstream programs such as this to reduce higher-risk crises.

5) 40199R APR - Culturally Specific Behavioral Health Programs

By identifying the gaps in service and expanding services to our BIPOC communities, these behavioral health supports can address service delivery gaps that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. This initiative invests in new and ongoing culturally specific Peer Recovery Support services, ensuring strong infrastructure for promising programs leading to sustained expanded culturally specific services. This approach recognizes that communities have unique needs, and services should be tailored to address their specific needs. This initiative is a crucial step in addressing the ongoing need for mental health and addiction services and resources, especially in communities facing greater disparities.

6) 40199Q APR - Gun Violence Impacted Families Behavioral Health Team

Gun violence, shootings, and homicides have increased in Multnomah County. Exasperated political and community leaders in Portland acknowledge gun violence continues to rise in the city despite efforts to counter it. The committee recognizes gun violence is a racial justice issue fueled by discrimination and structural inequities in our society. Gun violence in Multnomah County disproportionately impacts our African American, Latinx, Asian, and African Refugee communities.

This program provides additional direct mental health services to youth and their families affected by gun violence. Therefore, the committee recommends funding this offer to improve health outcomes and provide trauma-informed services and community-informed practices in partnership with community partners and providers.

6) 40199X APR - Public Health Gun Violence

The Public Health's Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion unit is requesting to retain three Community Health Specialists to provide services and technical assistance to youth and persons of color in our community. The gun violence curriculum supports over 8,000 youth from the Latinx, Somali, Black, and African American communities. The Community Health Specialists have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to support these populations who experience greater disparities and higher risk of exposure to violence. This offer dovetails with the previous prioritized offer, 40199Q ARP Gun Violence Impacted Families Behavior Health Team. Together, they speak to the CBAC's priority to invest in culturally-specific, peer-led services for historically excluded populations.

7) 40199D ARP - Behavioral Health - Continuing COVID Response

The COVID-19 pandemic brutally exposed the many weaknesses in our healthcare system by highlighting health inequities disproportionately affecting people of color. This glaring statistic

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has forced everyone to have a long-overdue discussion about the factors that contribute towards health and racial equity. Now years later, communities of color are still experiencing these ramifications and are in dire need of mental health services. We strongly endorse the Behavioral Health Division's mission to continually address the behavioral health challenges these support services will address. We hope that this can begin to close the health equity gap that is unfairly affecting our most vulnerable communities.

8) 40040C Accounts Payable Capacity

This request adds 1.0 FTE to the Accounts Payable team to fill capacity gaps and reduce utilization of contingent staff. The Health Department contracts with local community-based organizations, many of which serve primarily BIPOC communities and work to advance health equity. These organizations rely on timely remittance for monthly payroll and bills to further this work. Prioritizing health equity, and the support of this work, allows our community to uphold racial justice in the healthcare system – a core value of this CBAC. Timely remittance and AP capacity to reach the goal of 95% of invoices paid within 30 days will support these local organizations and maintain partnerships that work to address structural drivers of inequity.

9) 40039D Human Resources Employee Experience FTE

The Health Department and CBAC recognizes the importance of supporting county employees and their experience. The COVID-19 pandemic set off nearly unprecedented churn in the U.S. labor market. In 2021, more than 47 million workers quit their jobs, many of whom were in search of an improved work-life balance and flexibility, increased compensation, and strong company culture. Companies in almost every industry are desperate to hire people to keep up with demand. During the pandemic reshuffling, jobs that require in-person attendance and traditionally have lower wages have had a more difficult time retaining workers. Therefore, the committee recommends funding - Human Resources Employee Experience to address the needs of a fatigued workforce and support the well-being of Health Department employees. Addressing employee well-being can have a positive impact on productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organizational success

10) 40040B Technical Support for Community Based Organizations

Finance strategies are critical services and support infrastructure for improved health outcomes for partnering community organizations. The committee supports building trusting partnerships with community partners and supportive engagement with communities and staff to drive positive changes, especially in business, operational, and financial management.

The nonprofit sector is one of the largest in the U.S. economy. Despite the inevitable hit, due to COVID-19 and the resulting economic contraction, we've seen a drastic rise in charitable giving. In years past, the sector has encompassed more than 12 million jobs, and public charities have spent almost \$2 trillion annually. As a result, accountability and transparency have become

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increasingly important for nonprofits. Grantors that fund nonprofits want to know that their investments are being used wisely.

Nonprofits are integral to the economy and the health of communities in Oregon and Multnomah County. Therefore, the committee recommends funding Program #40040B to provide Technical Support for Community Based Organizations.

11) 40199E ARP - COVID-19 Response Health Officer

The Health Department is asking for a one-time offer to bridge the gap on public health services delivery during the COVID response recovery. The county is responsible for providing safe and effective care to patients, and clinical oversight plays a critical role in identifying and addressing potential risks and errors that could harm patients. Clinical oversight helps to ensure that healthcare providers follow best practices, adhere to established protocols, and make informed decisions that prioritize patient safety. This limited duration FTE request is necessary to provide direct oversight on physician focused supervision to the team.

12) 40039C Human Resources Payroll Assistance FTE

To effectively support the county's employees and provide equitable service to all employees, additional support on payroll knowledge and entry. These three positions would support the ongoing efforts to help employees manage their time effectively and decrease errors on payroll. This aligns with our CBAC values to operate with dignity and respect. The organizational infrastructure is needed to support the workforce and ensure the employee has the tools to be successful in their role, which leads to a retained workforce.

13) 40042B Procurement Capacity

This request adds 1.0 FTE to manage the increased volume of procurement and purchasing activities. Increasing procurement capacity will enable the department to provide time sensitive medical and program supplies, including patient education. The Institute of Medicine has identified six domains of healthcare quality and, as such, states that healthcare should be: safe, effective, timely, patient-centered, efficient, and equitable. We believe that increasing procurement capacity aligns with the provision of quality healthcare by ensuring the department's health centers have timely access to medical and program supplies.

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ONE TIME OFFERS

1) 40199I APR - COVID-19 Response Support Services

This one-time program offer will provide the infrastructure to provide ongoing financial management of APR funds. The last year of ARP funds will be managed by the Financial Business Management group, as they are also managing contracts who support culturally-specific services and heavily rely on timely and accurate payments.

2) 40040D Behavior Health Finance Billing

Our committee includes behavioral health professionals who can attest that documentation and billing are some of the most complicated and frustrating parts of doing the work. Untangling the web of Medicaid, Medicare, Oregon Health Plan, private insurance, electronic health record systems, billable services, non-billable services, etc. is a full-time job. Considering the array of behavioral health contracts the county holds with various agencies around town, it is worth dedicating the effort to making billing more efficient and accurate. This one-time offer has the potential to pay itself off through improved billing processes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS –

The Health Department Community-Based Advisory Committee (CBAC) expresses our utmost gratitude to all department employees who have worked tirelessly in leading the community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize and appreciate the invaluable contributions that each and every employee has made to keep our community safe and healthy during these years.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Wendy Lear and Michael Eaves from the department for their unwavering support in staffing our committee's work. Their invaluable assistance and expertise have been critical in enabling our committee to fulfill its mission effectively. We deeply appreciate their thoughtfulness, patience, and perspective, which have contributed to the success of our committee's efforts.

We look forward to continued collaboration in achieving our shared goals.