



Legislation Text

File #: 20-519, **Version:** 1

Report Prepared by: Stephanie R. Dietz, Interim City Manager

SUBJECT: Approval of Memorandum of Understanding Between the Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Merced County Sheriff, and the City of Merced Police Department for the Establishment of a Mobile Crisis Response Team

REPORT IN BRIEF

Considers the authorization to approve the memorandum of understanding between the Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Merced County Sheriff, and the City of Merced Police Department for establishment of a mobile crisis response team.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion approving the memorandum of understanding and authorizing the City Manager or the Assistant City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve, subject to modifications as conditioned by City Council; or,
3. Deny this request; or,
4. Refer back to staff for reconsideration of specific items (specific items to be addressed in City Council motion); or,
5. Continue to a future City Council meeting (date and time to be specified in motion).

AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This recommendation is consistent with City Council's priority in establishing and strengthening community partnerships to enhance the quality of life of residents within the City of Merced.

DISCUSSION

History

In December 2014, the Mental Health Services Act Ongoing Planning Council and Merced County Board of Supervisors approved the proposed project request for expanding crisis support services of Merced County. The desire of Behavioral Health and Recovery Services was to expand crisis support services to the community by adding a Mobile Crisis Response Team, staffed by Mental Health Clinicians, as an adjunct to the Crisis Stabilization Unit and the Triage Program. The development of

a Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) was designed to evaluate community members needs early and determine the least restrictive environment safe enough to place or refer one to when struggling with a crisis.

Over the past two years, the City of Merced has been working collectively with other cities, Merced County and Assemblymember Grey to evaluate the best way to provide services to those individuals in our community experiencing homelessness. As part of these planning efforts, an increase in the need for Behavior Health services was identified. This need, in addition to the overall demand for Mental Health Clinicians throughout the state, has resulted in re-examining the way behavioral health services are provided locally. As a result of this re-evaluation, the MCRT team, partnered with the Merced Police Department's Disruptive Area Response Team (DART), was identified to provide critical services to those in crisis.

The team will continue to aid and assist our community partners to focus on what they do best and not be constrained with issues of support beyond their scope or necessity. DART will be able to request support from the MCRT team, as available, to respond in the community for behavioral health situations. Prioritization will be considered based on imminent danger and crisis need. The MCRT will focus on triage and evaluation to determine the need for a higher level of care, or other appropriate services or referrals throughout the community.

The Memorandum of Understanding between Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Merced County Sheriff, and the City of Merced Police Department outlines an established working relationship among all parties. Additionally, it documents the responsibilities of each party relative to the provision of the MCRT services in Merced County (see attached MOU for description of responsibilities).

MCRT is designed to improve collaboration between BHRS and law enforcement systems, with the goal of more effective handling of incidents involving law enforcement officers and persons in need of immediate behavioral health crisis and/or interventions. Parties of this understanding agree to work together in the most efficient and professional manner in order to best serve residents of Merced County.

The term of this agreement is ongoing, with the effective commencement date of July 1, 2020. This MOU may be amended only in writing with signed approval through all parties specified in the MOU. A representative of any participating agency can request a review of the MOU at any time if deemed necessary for operational effectiveness. Participating agencies may elect to terminate their participation in this MOU by providing written notification to the MCRT MOU participants. Termination will take effect no less than thirty (30) days after receipt of written notification or upon a date established by mutual agreement.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The Merced Police Department Disruptive Area Response Team (DART) is currently part of the adopted FY 2020/21 Annual Budget. No additional resources are needed at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Memorandum of Understanding