

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: December 30, 2021

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, providing an informational update on the Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC)

File Type: Informational Report

BACKGROUND

In December 2020, the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) signed a letter of intent with four area health systems to create a new psychiatric emergency room that will quickly assess and treat individuals in psychiatric distress. This new facility will reduce criminal justice system involvement for mentally ill, provide meaningful connections to community mental health services, and reduce potentially unnecessary psychiatric hospitalizations.

The facility will serve all residents regardless of ability to pay. Revenues are not anticipated to fully cover costs of providing care. The private healthcare partners have agreed to subsidize 50 percent of the operational deficit with the remaining subsidy coming from Milwaukee County. This project represents an innovative public-private partnership aimed at providing high quality emergency mental health services in a location that is convenient and accessible.

POLICY

County Board Resolutions	File No. 21-42, 21-314
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UPDATE

Construction of the Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) facility is underway with all major external components of the facility finalized. During the winter, the project will shift to internal construction ahead of the spring 2022 anticipated opening date. Simultaneous to construction, Advocate Aurora is beginning operational implementation for the MHEC. Advocate Aurora is in the process of recruiting and training clinical staff to form the core team to operate the facility.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has confirmed revenue enhancements for the MHEC care delivery model that are expected to reduce annual operating costs by up to \$4 million annually. This amount will vary depending on volume and payer mix of clients served at the facility. The revenue enhancements are expected to more than offset than anticipated increase in labor costs at this facility.

FISCAL EFFECT

There are no anticipated variances from existing project budget. This item is informational only.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director
Michael Lappen, Administrator, Behavioral Health Division
Matt Fortman, BHD Fiscal Administrator

PREPARED BY:

Michael Lappen, Administrator, Behavioral Health Division

APPROVED BY:

Shakita LaGrant-McClain
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, DHHS Director

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Felesia Martin, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, & Strategic Planning Committee
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Steve Cady, Research Director, Comptroller's Office
Pam Matthews, Fiscal & Management Analyst, DAS
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, Research & Policy Analyst, Comptroller's Office