

MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Inter-Office Memorandum

DATE: May 22, 2012

TO: Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by: Geri Lyday, Administrator, Disabilities Services Division

SUBJECT: **Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, Requesting authorization to increase by \$125,000 from \$125,000 to \$250,000 and extend the term from January 1, 2012 through June 30, 2012 to January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012 the 2012 purchase of services contract with Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. for the provision of Crisis Respite Home services in the Disabilities Services Division**

Policy Issue

Section 46.09 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances requires County Board approval for the purchase of human services from nongovernmental vendors. Per Section 46.09, the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is requesting authorization to increase by \$125,000 from \$125,000 to \$250,000 and extend the term from January 1, 2012 through June 30, 2012 to January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012 the 2012 purchase of services contract with Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. for the provision of Crisis Respite Home services in the Disability Services Division (DSD).

Background and Rationale

In December 2011, the County Board authorized a 2012 purchase of service contract for six months to Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. to provide Crisis Respite Home services. Only a six-month agreement was recommended because the current location providing Crisis Respite Home services is not fully accessible and since it serves individuals with developmental and physical disabilities the provider of crisis beds needs to offer a fully accessible facility. Past efforts to acquire an alternate location to meet this requirement have not been successful.

In its December report to the Committee on Health and Human Needs, DSD reported that a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in 2011 to seek proposals for Crisis Respite Home services. In this RFP, DSD indicated that the successful bidder would be required to provide a fully accessible home. While the RFP resulted in only two proposals being received, one of the proposals failed to demonstrate that the agency could successfully acquire a facility in time to begin a 2012 contract. This option was going to be a newly built home. Therefore, the contract

was awarded to the existing provider with the provision that an alternative location that is fully accessible be located by June 2012. If this were not completed, DSD would seek an alternate provider.

As of the writing of this report, the existing provider, Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. has not successfully located a fully accessible location. The provider has made efforts to locate a property for this purpose, but has not been able to locate a suitable alternative. The department has also offered this provider a low interest loan from the home program in the DHHS Housing Division to make accessible accommodations on a previous home. The provider did not want to pursue the loan. It is the position of DSD that the provider was given sufficient time and notice to acquire a fully accessible facility. The Division has discussed this for over two years with the provider and no concrete option has been located. It is therefore being recommended that an RFP be released to seek alternatives.

Therefore, DSD has issued a new RFP to seek proposals for a fully accessible location and a highly qualified provider that will provide Crisis Respite Home services. DSD is requesting authorization to extend the agreement with Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. for six months while an alternative is identified. While it is anticipated that a new vendor will be available to begin providing services prior to the end of the year, DSD will terminate the contract with the existing provider when the successful bidder is identified. The contract agreement allows for a 30-day out clause by either party. DSD wants to assure a smooth transition and not be placed in a position without a resource. Consequently, we are recommending a contract for the balance of the year.

Current Service Needs

DSD continues to utilize the Crisis Respite Home as a less restrictive service alternative for individuals with intellectual disabilities or with co-occurring mental health and intellectual disabilities who live in the community and need short-term crisis intervention at a location other than their community residence. Without these crisis beds, these individuals are and would likely be admitted to units at the Behavioral Health Division (BHD). Referrals come from community residential providers, DSD's Adult Protective Services Unit, families and BHD's Psychiatric Crisis Services (PCS). Many individuals who utilize this service are known to the long-term care system or have been served by BHD or both. However, some individuals who utilize services have not been served by the existing service delivery system and may have come to the attention of the system due to the sudden loss of a caregiver or due to the incapacity of the family to provide support.

Due to the complex needs individuals often exhibit when residing at the Crisis Respite Home, careful planning must go into developing and implementing the steps necessary to successfully return the person to their permanent living arrangements or to a new community-based living arrangement. It is therefore imperative that the contracted provider demonstrates sophisticated clinical abilities and has highly trained and experience staff. Typically, individuals have funding for their long term support needs through one of the Family Care options

available and can utilize that resource to help identify living alternatives as they transition from the Crisis Respite Home.

Additional Capacity/BHD Hilltop Downsizing

As reported to the Health and Human Needs Committee in May 2012, DSD continues to work in conjunction with BHD on a downsizing initiative for its Hilltop facility for individuals with co-occurring mental illness and intellectual disabilities. It is anticipated that up to 24 individuals who are currently residing at the Hilltop facility will be moving to community-based living arrangement by the middle of CY 2013.

While planning for the downsizing of the Hilltop facility, individuals currently residing and being served at Hilltop have been assessed as to what community-based supports will be required as they transition to a new living arrangement. Many of these individuals experience periodic increases in support needs and some may need occasional Crisis Respite Home services. This is believed to be a better alternative than admitting an individual to Psychiatric Crisis Service when he or she needs to have a temporary alternative living arrangement to diffuse a crisis situation due to behavioral challenges or other circumstances. This alternative is also a more cost-effective and a clinically appropriate option since individuals will have access to special services from staff who have experience working with individuals with co-occurring mental illness and intellectual disabilities.

To help support this initiative, the Crisis Respite Home RFP is seeking expansion of the existing capacity from four to eight beds. It is anticipated that the additional capacity will be utilized to support those individuals who will transition from the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) Hilltop downsizing initiative if there is a behavioral crisis. This an integral part of the downsizing initiative and will also be a beneficial service to all individuals with intellectual disabilities who experience short-term crisis situations and are in need of brief crisis respite services.

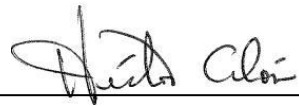
The additional funding for this initiative will be available from the Mental Health Community investment funding. The expansion will provide needed capacity for Crisis Respite resources for individuals with a developmental disability and mental health issues.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the County Board authorize the Director, DHHS or his designee to increase by \$125,000 from \$125,000 to \$250,000 and extend the term from January 1, 2012 through June 30, 2012 to January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012 the 2012 purchase of services contract with Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. for the provision of Crisis Respite Home services.

Fiscal Effect

Funding for this contract is already budgeted in the 2012 DSD budget. There is no additional tax levy required (see attached fiscal note).



Héctor Colón, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

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