

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 20, 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

File Type: Informational Report

BACKGROUND

In December 2020, The Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services 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

As of July 2021, this project has made substantial progress in terms of both agreements and facility construction. The Member Agreement, the agreement defining the relationship between Milwaukee County and the four area health systems to oversee and financially subsidize this program, and the Master Service Agreement, the agreement defining the relationship between the Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) governance body and the service operator (Advocate Aurora Health), have been fully signed and executed. These agreements represented the final step in formalizing the MHEC governance and commitment from all parties.

As of August 9, 2021, Milwaukee County closed on the land transaction transferring full ownership of the property on 12th and Walnut to Mental Health Emergency Center, Inc. Construction is underway with concrete footings installed.

Simultaneous to construction, Advocate Aurora is beginning operational implementation for the MHEC. The administrator position, the role that will oversee operations at the MHEC, is in the process of being hired while other operational buildout continues.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This project is critical in providing continued access and treatment for individuals in psychiatric distress which is aligned with the strategic plan in determining how services get delivered to advance health equity.

FISCAL EFFECT

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, DHHS Director

cc: County Executive David Crowley
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance Committee
Sup. Felesia Martin, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, & Strategic Planning Committee
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