



# COUNTY OF NEVADA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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## NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Memo

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**MEETING DATE:** September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020  
**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** **Ryan Gruver, Director of Health and Human Services Agency**  
**SUBJECT:** Presentation regarding Operation Sugarloaf, a collaborative homeless navigation project.

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**RECOMMENDATION: Informational Presentation – 15 minutes estimated duration**

**FUNDING:** Not Applicable

**BACKGROUND:**

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the State made available “Project Roomkey” funding. People living in homeless encampments are at particular risk of COVID-19, and the State’s intent with the funding was for counties to move people from densely packed encampments to individual motel placements with supportive services. In Nevada County our homeless population is more dispersed, with some key exceptions, including a long-term encampment on Sugarloaf Mountain in Nevada City.

While there have been homeless encampments on Sugarloaf Mountain for years, since March with businesses closed and reduced shelter capacity, activity on the mountain had increased significantly. Community members were contacting the City and County expressing concern for the homeless individuals, for the environment and for the potential for fires.

Since its formation in July of 2019, the County’s collaborative HOME Team has been actively working to engage the homeless community throughout the county, including on Sugarloaf Mountain. Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office and Nevada City Police were actively engaging with neighbors and homeless individuals on Sugarloaf Mountain. Due to limitations from the so called “Boise Decision,” law enforcement tools to address the issues were extremely limited. Efforts to

clear encampments have also been ineffective in the past, with homeless individuals simply moving to other locations, including densely wooded areas when an existing encampment is cleared.

With the injection of Project Roomkey funding, the County and partners saw an opportunity to try something new, and in partnership with community partners and the homeless individuals on Sugarloaf Mountain, “Operation Sugarloaf” was conceived.

The Operation Sugarloaf project began with a specific objective: determine if a targeted intervention in a high impact camping area can lead to meaningful engagement and long term solutions for homeless individuals, as well as lessen community risk from fire and other environmental and social impacts.

This information presentation will address key outcomes, lessons learned and a fiscal analysis from this Project

**Item Initiated and Approved by:** Ryan Gruver, Director of Health and Human Services  
Agency