



**NEVADA COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
AGENCY**

**Health & Human Services  
Agency Director  
Ryan Gruver**

**Behavioral Health Director:  
Phebe Bell, MSW**

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
(Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Program)**

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**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
Board Agenda Memo**

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**MEETING DATE:** June 23, 2020

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** **Phebe Bell**

**SUBJECT:** Resolution approving execution of a renewal contract with SPIRIT - Peers for Independence and Recovery, Inc. for peer support services for individuals in emotional crisis as a component of the County's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Services and Supports (CSS) Plan in the maximum amount of \$96,493 for fiscal year 2020/21.

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the attached Resolution.

**FUNDING:** Services are fully funded from MHSA (Mental Health Services Act) monies. The Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) provides an ongoing revenue source for the expansion and enhancement of mental health services as provided by State and County agencies. Services are included in the F/Y 2020/21 Department Budget. There are no county general fund dollars required in the Agreement.

**BACKGROUND:** The process of coming into the hospital for a crisis assessment can be intimidating and frightening. While the crisis team is comprised of compassionate professionals, the wisdom and care of a peer who has experienced their own mental health crises can be invaluable to the person who has come in for assessment. The extra support from someone who can explain the process to you as well as empathize with how you are feeling can help normalize what can be a confusing and scary process.

Under this Agreement, SPIRIT will continue to provide support and counseling to individuals in emotional crisis while waiting for a 5150 evaluation at Sierra Nevada Memorial Emergency Room, or the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) and will also provide subsequent follow up services to those who have not met the 5150 criteria and have been released from the ER. The follow up services

provided by SPIRIT help to avoid unnecessary repeat Emergency Room visits and helps to prevent symptoms from increasing or escalating out of control.

The objectives of the SPIRIT-ER Crisis Program are to:

- Enable individuals in mental health crisis to utilize other community resources and move towards recovery. Peer Supporters will provide networking and referrals.
- Reduce recidivism rates of mental health clients at the SNMH-ER/Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU). Peer Supporters will provide resources that offer early intervention.
- Reduce the number of inpatient psychiatric hospital days used. Peer Supporters will provide lower cost resources that offer early intervention and increase capacity of individuals to self-regulate before symptoms escalate to high cost crisis status.

The economic ramifications of the Coronavirus pandemic are significantly impacting major funding sources relied on by the department. Behavioral Health is monitoring the situation closely and is actively involved in advocacy efforts through the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) to ensure reasonable funding for county services. Additionally, the department has reviewed the 20-21 budget carefully and areas for reduction have been identified to reduce the pressure on existing funding sources. At the same time, demand for behavioral health services is likely to increase over coming months due to both the economic stress and social isolation of this time, as well as due to increasing numbers of Medi-Cal beneficiaries in our county. The department is proposing to move forward with critical contracts at levels similar to what was originally budgeted, but with the understanding that midyear reductions may be necessary if revenues continue to decline. Behavioral Health staff are in close communication with all contractors and have provided support to them around modifying their processes and protocols so that staff can remain safe and community members can safely get the care they need. Staff are also working closely with providers to increase productivity so that we can continue to maximize our ability to draw down federal funds. Providers are aware that midyear cuts may be needed if the economic situation worsens. Additional analysis and review will be done as needed throughout the year. This contract does not rely on general funds and Behavioral Health's current anticipated revenues along with fund balances are sufficient to support this contract at this time.

It is recommended that the Board approve this renewal agreement as Peer support from people with similar life experience has proven to be extremely valuable in helping individuals navigate through difficult situations. Peer Supporters can offer more authentic empathy, validation and practical suggestions for coping strategies to individuals in their path to recovery and wellness.

**Item Initiated and Approved by:** Phebe Bell, MSW – Behavioral Health Director