



**NEVADA COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
AGENCY**

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

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

**Behavioral Health Medical Director:  
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**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:** July 14, 2020

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

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

**SUBJECT:** Resolution approving execution of a renewal contact with Auburn Counseling Services, Inc., d/b/a Communicare for the provision of Phone Triage Services for the Nevada County Behavioral Health Department; Regional Telephone Triage Services for Placer, El Dorado, and Plumas Counties' Adult System of Care and Children's System of Care (CSOC); New Directions Program Services, as well as Patients' Rights, Quality Assurance Services, Substance Use Disorder Care Coordination and Mental Health Therapy in the jail; in the maximum amount of \$1,392,250 for Fiscal Year 2020/21.

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the attached Resolution.

**FUNDING:** This Agreement is funded by Medi-Cal reimbursement, Realignment, MHSA (Mental Health Services Act), HRSA Rural Health Opioid Grant funds, Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program Grant funds and funds received from a revenue contract with the County of Placer, County of El Dorado and County of Plumas for the regional telephone triage and telephone answering services components. Services are within the Department's FY 2020/21 budget. There are no county general fund dollars required in the Agreement.

**BACKGROUND:** Under this Agreement, the Contractor provides phone triage services (both crisis and access calls) and patients' rights and quality assurance services on behalf of the Nevada County Behavioral Health Department (NCBH). Contractor answers all crisis line telephone calls, along with occasional business and other clinically-related calls. Crisis Phone Triage Services are provided 24 hours per day. Crisis Triage Staff evaluates each call and provides information, consultation services, and assesses if the call is an emergency and should be forwarded to the Crisis Team.

Access Phone Triage is provided after hours, on holidays and when County staff is not available to take such calls. Access calls are assessed to determine if the call is a request for possible services, as compared to a general business call, crisis call, or other clinical calls from an open client. The Contractor also provides case management, plan development, collateral and rehabilitation mental health services (as defined by California Code of Regulation, Title 9), as well as adult education classes for County clients in the New Directions Behavioral Health Program. Triage services are also offered to other counties and NCBH receives reimbursement from those counties for this service.

In addition to triage, this agreement supports other critical services including New Directions Program Services, as well as Patients' Rights, Quality Assurance Services, Substance Use Disorder Care Coordination and Mental Health Therapy in the jail. Each of these services allows the department to address unmet needs in the community and enhances the quality and breadth of care the department is able to offer.

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 the renewal agreement as this contract serves the needs of the mentally ill by having a phone triage line in Nevada County, along with ensuring that the County meets state mandated programs for clinical supervision, patient rights advocacy and quality assurance.

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