



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY SECURES \$3 MILLION HOMELESSNESS GRANT

The County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health is pleased to announce a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to address mental health-related issues for people experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County.

The two-year grant will help provide services to those experiencing serious mental illness, severe emotional disturbance, co-occurring disorders and homelessness. The grant will be supported by Behavioral Health Division in conjunction with the County's Homeless Person's Health Project (HPHP) and Housing for Health Division (H4H).

"Homelessness is a concern for everyone who lives in Santa Cruz County. This highly competitive grant will provide much-needed funding to assist those who are experiencing homelessness connect with services and support an individual's path to recovery, whether that be addressing substance use disorders, mental illness, or both. This will allow us to take a compassionate approach to care including comprehensive contacts in the community through a multidisciplinary team who will work together to support the individual in getting the help they need and deserve," Behavioral Health Director Erik Riera said.

The project provides direct services including medication management, peer support services and case management to vulnerable members of the community, and will focus services within the geographic region of the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, both areas with data supporting high concentrations of people experiencing behavioral health challenges and homelessness. Field-based community services will be enhanced with a mobile health clinic.

Through direct, integrated services, project team members will work with clients to establish stable, ongoing connections to health, behavioral health, and housing providers. Behavioral Health Director of Adult Services Karen Kern and Director of Community Engagement Cassandra Eslami secured the grant on behalf of the community.