



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAM

PRESS RELEASE

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Expanded Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services Approved for Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal Beneficiaries

Santa Cruz County residents and families will soon benefit from expanded drug and alcohol treatment after the County recently became the 4th in California approved for expanded substance use disorder coverage under Medi-Cal.

On June 20th, the California Department of Health Care Services approved Santa Cruz County's plan to implement an expanded Drug Medi-Cal program under the Affordable Care Act, providing Medi-Cal-eligible patients coverage for an expanded range of treatment options such as detoxification, residential treatment and other services for the first time. Once in place, the program could double the number of people participating in treatment annually, as well as reduce wait times.

“Currently, fewer than half of county residents who are seeking treatment for a substance use disorder are able to get the type of care they need when they need it. Elimination of waiting lists for alcohol and drug treatment will save many lives, reduce individual and family suffering, and save public dollars that are currently being spent on the fallout from untreated addiction”, said Bill Manov, Ph.D., Chief of the County Health Services Agency's Alcohol and Drug Program.

The Drug Medi-Cal expansion will also include services such as case management and follow-up care for persons completing acute treatment, which is critical to long-term recovery. The expansion is a key step toward meeting the goals of the County's Strategic Plan for Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Intervention Services, which has been unanimously endorsed by the Board of Supervisors, of providing treatment on request for all who need it.

“Too many individuals and families affected by substance use disorders have had limited access to treatment. We are excited about the opportunity to finally address the need for services through our partner provider agencies in the community,” said Erik Riera, the County's Director of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Subject to Board of Supervisors approval, the County and State must formalize contracts for services before the expanded Drug Medi-Cal program goes into effect.