

Better Health for All*County of Santa Clara Health System*

2325 Enborg Lane, Suite 320

San Jose, California 95128

Phone: (408) 885-6868

Fax: (408) 885-4051

DATE: 9/28/2020

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: René G. Santiago, Deputy County Executive/Director, SCVHHS
Sherri Terao, Director of Behavioral Health Services

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Response in Barbara Arons Pavilion and Emergency Psychiatric Services

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René G. Santiago

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Sherri Terao

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Supervisor Ellenberg requested the Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD) to provide an off-agenda report related to the County's COVID-19 response in Barbara Arons Pavilion (BAP) and Emergency Psychiatric Services (EPS). This memo provides the requested information.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic response, Valley Medical Center's (VMC) highest priority is to protect and maintain the safety and health of patients, families, visitors, staff, and community. BHSD and VMC have adopted guidelines that continue to be promulgated by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department (PHD), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) in developing the County's COVID-19 mitigation plan for VMC, which includes BAP and EPS. Also, BHSD continually updates guidelines as needed to respond to the changing guidelines to mitigate the spread of the disease, increased testing capacity by PHD and the CDC.

BAP and EPS are considered congregate living facilities, and the primary strategy is to reduce and maintain a limited patient census to provide options to comply with social distancing guidelines and creating opportunities for quarantining. BHSD coordinated this effort with VMC to develop a comprehensive COVID-19 response plan.

In April 2020, BHSD converted Muriel Wright into a facility to temporarily house patients waiting for an Institute for Mental Disease (IMD) bed. The plan in EPS is to maintain a reduced census through:

- Outreach and education with law enforcement the criteria for involuntary mental health holds.
- Arrange for the BHSD Mobile Crisis Response Team to complete field visits in the local Emergency Departments.
- Utilize the network of acute care hospitals throughout the County to admit patients
- Utilize the space formerly occupied by the BHSD Mental Health Urgent Care as an overflow area for EPS patients.

- Additionally, we developed a 6-bed COVID-19 pod to treat patients who are COVID-19 positive and acute psychiatrically.

The following additional measures are currently being implemented at BAP and EPS as part of the COVID-19 plan:

- In EPS, allow a minimum of 6-feet of distance between chairs/recliners/beds in common spaces and open areas.
- Limit the number of patients at EPS and BAP for social distancing guidelines.
- Use of telehealth to assess COVID-19 patients who are on a 5150 in the Emergency Department.
- Patients have access to clean clothes and laundry facilities.
- Universal masking and utilization of face shields among staff, and universal masking for patients.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch areas at least twice per day, once prior to each shift.
- Provide access to personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g., masks, hand sanitizer, soap, and water for handwashing and continued education to staff and patients regarding appropriate utilization of PPE.
- Completion of voluntary testing of all staff and physicians who work at BAP and EPS and re-testing at recommended intervals.
- Completion of baseline testing for BAP inpatients and re-testing at recommended intervals.
- Provide patients COVID-19 related resources and community resources at discharge.
- Test patients prior to referral to other congregate living facilities.
- Conversion of the LPS court process to “telecourt.”
- Post screeners at each entrance of BAP and EPS, responsible for taking the temperature and a symptom screen of all employees, clients, and visitors entering the facility.
- Restriction of visitors to BAP and EPS.
- Regular Town Hall Forums and weekly communication bulletins to staff about their role and responsibilities in providing patient care during COVID-19.
- Escalation of BAP and EPS concerns and requests through the Health System’s Hospital Command Center for expediency and timely response to needs.
- Bi-weekly huddles with BHSD Leadership to case conference discharged EPS patients with a focus on expediting discharges.

cc: Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board
Chief Board Aides
Bianca Jones, OBA
Agenda Review Administrator