

*Better Health for All*

DATE: August 5, 2022

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

FROM: Rene Santiago, Deputy County Executive/Director, Health System <sup>DS</sup>  
Sherri Terao, Director of Behavioral Health Services <sup>DS</sup> <sup>ST</sup>

**SUBJECT: Blackbird House Utilization and Feasibility of Expansion**

---

During the Board of Supervisors' Meeting on June 28, 2022 (Item No. 77), Supervisor Ellenberg requested that the Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD) provide an off-agenda report on 1) the utilization of Caminar's peer respite services through Blackbird House; 2) the possibility of funding for these services from California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) supports; and 3) the feasibility of expansion of beds and locations for these services.

- 1) Utilization of Caminar's peer respite services through Blackbird House:  
The Blackbird House Peer Respite program reopened at the end of December 2021. A total of 70 individuals participated in the peer respite program between January and June 2022. Since reopening there has been a steady increase in utilization of services, with the occupancy between April and June reaching 85%-100% capacity. Approximately 33% of individuals are repeat utilizers and the length of stay of all individuals average between 10-14 days.
- 2) Possibility of funding for these services from CalAIM supports:  
The Whole Person Care pilot has transitioned to CalAIM Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports (CM) administered by the Managed Care Plans. Unfortunately, there are currently no available options within ECM/CM to fund peer respite services, as this is not one of the service categories covered under the new benefit. The County of Santa Clara Health and Hospital System Office of System Integration and Transformation submitted a letter to the state to have peer respite services considered in the future for alignment with CalAIM Providing Access and Transforming Health (PATH) initiative. While the County was approved for some mitigation funds, peer respite was not part of the allocation.
- 3) Feasibility of expansion of beds and locations for these services:  
Although the peer respite program is contracted and funded to accommodate up to 10 individuals at a time, Caminar is currently permitted to only serve up to six individuals at a time. On October 20, 2021, Caminar submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to provide services for up to 10 individuals at a time. The CUP request was

denied by the City of San Jose on January 5, 2022. Per the recommendation by the City of San Jose, Caminar is now attempting to rezone the site as a mixed-use neighborhood. This option is more cost effective and will only require a site development permit, and not a public hearing. On July 25, 2022, Caminar submitted a Zoning Application and Development/Use Permit Preliminary Review Request. If approved, this permit would allow Caminar to serve up to 10 individuals at a time, per the original contract. Behavioral Health Services Department has the funds within its existing budget to accommodate the addition of four beds to serve a total of 10 individuals simultaneously. Upon the analysis of current utilization and trends, the additional four beds should satisfy current and future community needs. BHSD will continue to monitor trending needs to determine if and when any additional geographic locations are needed and the funding necessary for it.

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