

CALIFORNIA AWARDS MILLIONS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS TO COMBAT COVID-19

SACRAMENTO — The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) awarded nearly \$5.2 million to 36 mental health and/or substance use disorder providers through the COVID-19 Substance Use and Mental Health Disorder Mitigation Project to support community mitigation measures that prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect those who are at increased risk for severe illness.

“COVID-19 is still with us. This investment will help prevent its spread and protect those who are living with behavioral health disorders and may have underlying medical conditions that increase their risk for severe illness or death,” said **DHCS Director Michelle Baass**.

From September 15, 2023, through March 31, 2025, providers will receive up to \$500,000 to expand services to provide education about COVID-19 testing, implement onsite COVID-19 testing, collaborate with community partners to prevent infectious disease transmission, and expand COVID-19 response services to individuals connected to the behavioral health system.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT: Targeted support is essential for mental health and substance use treatment providers to overcome barriers toward achieving and maintaining high COVID-19 testing rates. Having a mental health or substance use disorder diagnosis can make one more likely to become severely ill and/or die from COVID-19. In addition, people living with behavioral health disorders may have underlying medical conditions, such as respiratory or cardiovascular disease, chronic liver disease, or drug use behaviors, which put them at increased risk for severe illness or death from COVID-19.

GRANT AWARDEES: Eligible applicants include California-based licensed, certified, or otherwise qualified substance use and/or mental health disorder providers, tribal organizations, county providers, or 501(c)(3) community-based organizations, such as federally qualified health centers, certified community behavioral health clinics, crisis care mobile unit programs, harm reduction service providers, recovery residences, transitional housing facilities, homeless shelters, opioid treatment programs, or office-based opioid treatment providers with established and trusted community relationships.

Providers awarded contracts are required to demonstrate specific ways to provide behavioral services to youth, young adults, and/or adults engaged in mental health or substance use services; demonstrate a commitment to providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services; and address social inequities.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND: This project is funded by the Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant and Community Mental Health Services Block Grant. Grant funding was awarded to DHCS by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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