

BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HALF MOON BAY

AGENDA REPORT

For meeting of: **March 7, 2023**

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
VIA: Matthew Chidester, City Manager
FROM: Jennifer Chong, Senior Management Analyst
TITLE: **CARES PROGRAM - ONE YEAR UPDATE**

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update on the Crisis Assistant Response and Evaluation Services (CARES) Program, which will complete one year of operation on March 15, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact related to this update. The CARES Program is funded through June 30, 2023, utilizing grants, a County contribution, and the City's General Fund. Staff are currently exploring funding opportunities for FY 2023-24.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT:

This update supports the *Healthy Communities and Public Safety* element of the Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND:

In summer 2020, America experienced a widespread social justice movement focused on police reforms. This movement resonated with the Half Moon Bay community, who had witnessed local killings of two individuals at the hands of law enforcement: Sandra Harmon in spring of 2020 and Yanira Serrano-Garcia in summer 2014. The City Council prioritized community outreach and research related to public safety and law enforcement in Half Moon Bay to support these discussions. They also created a subcommittee to discuss the City's existing contract with the Sheriff, law enforcement in general, and identify recommendations for reforms to be proposed in Half Moon Bay. The information gathered through these efforts informed subcommittee and Council discussions, public safety response alternatives, and negotiations with the Sheriff, including the 2022 renewal of the contract.

The outreach, feedback and research ultimately led to the launch of the Crisis Assistance Response and Evaluation Services (CARES) program on March 16, 2022. The CARES program is operated through a contract with El Centro de Libertad and provides two-person mobile crisis response teams. Each response team consists of specially trained, bilingual crisis responders who are dispatched through the County's Public Safety Communications call center (911) and the 988 Crisis Hotline to calls where there are no immediate threats of violence.

The CARES team focuses on using culturally competent de-escalation, crisis-intervention, motivational interviewing, and suicide prevention tools to work with individuals in crisis. Examples of the types of calls the CARES team responded to in the last year include persons with suicidal ideations, persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol, persons experiencing a mental health crisis, parents calling with concern for an adolescent youth exhibiting unusual behavior, and community members reporting persons in some form of emotional distress.

The initial pilot program operated 40 hours per week and responded to calls within the City limits of Half Moon Bay, as well as the Moonridge Farmworker Housing Community just south of the City's limits in unincorporated San Mateo County. In the summer of 2022, the CARES team expanded services to the entire Coastside, including the unincorporated mid-Coast. In September 2022, the CARES team expanded its hours of operation by adding a second team. CARES now responds 7 days per week, from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm.

Funding for this program has come from three primary sources: the City's General Fund, the County of San Mateo, and the State of California Department of Health Care Services. The initial pilot was funded by a \$75,000 allocation from the City's FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget and a \$75,000 match from the County of San Mateo's Measure K sales tax fund. In early 2022, the City secured a \$180,000 grant from the Department of Health Care Services' BHJIS program, which extended the pilot program and increased its geographic scope and hours. An additional General Fund contribution of just over \$170,000 was included in the City's FY 2022-23 Adopted Budget to extend the program through the end of the fiscal year.

Separately, a \$25,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente is funding third-party program evaluation services, and an additional \$30,000 grant was provided by Supervisor Don Horsley directly to El Centro for the acquisition of a second vehicle to support the program's expansion in the summer of 2022.

Since the CARES team launched one year ago, they have responded to more than 300 calls across the Coastside. By serving as an alternative and partner to law-enforcement, fire, and other first responders, CARES has diverted several individuals from costly visits to emergency rooms and unnecessary entry into the criminal justice system. Collaboration with local and regional non-profits, County Health, the Sheriff's Office, and the community have been key to the success of the program and partnerships will remain vital for the continued success of the program.

DISCUSSION:

The CARES program was launched through the courage and leadership of the City Council, in collaboration with the County of San Mateo, local non-profits, and the community. The program has been deemed successful, and is providing a model to other communities regionally, throughout California, and even across the country. Continuation of the CARES program is a high priority, and its expansion to other parts of the County is on the horizon.

Going forward beyond this Fiscal Year, staff are exploring additional funding options to continue the program. Federal and State grants, philanthropic agencies, foundations, and the County remain options to continue supporting operations, including the C.R.I.S.I.S. Grant Pilot funded

through AB118 and a potential extension/expansion of the BHJIS grant program. Staff will also explore long-term revenue sources that can be connected to crisis response services.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Q1 Summary
2. Q2 Summary
3. Q3 Summary