



Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

Tammy Moss Chandler, Director

Jenine Miller, Psy.D., Behavioral Health Director
Behavioral Health and Recovery Services



May 4, 2020

Toby Ewing, Executive Director
Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
1325 J Street, Suite 1700
Sacramento, CA 95418

Re: County of Mendocino Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation Project Extension Request

Dear Director Ewing,

Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) would like to request an extension for the Round Valley Innovation Crisis Response project. The project was approved by MHSOAC on October 26, 2017 for \$1,124,293. In January 2018, the County finalized a contract with collaborating agency, Round Valley Indian Health Center, and expenditures under the initial work plan commenced. The official start date for this project, based on first expenditure of INN Project dollars, is January 15, 2018. The current project is scheduled to end in January of 2021, we request to extend the project through June 30, 2022.

We are requesting an extension of time to complete the project's learning goals. There were some early barriers in implementing the plan, related to finding a suitable replacement following the departure of the former project lead, and the policy and procedure approval processes and hiring processes taking longer than anticipated. Even without the project lead, Round Valley Indian Health Center had been working with stakeholders and the County MHSA team to determine what level of crisis response was to be tested, and to establish additional feedback related to trust and communication.

The current project manager was hired by Round Valley Indian Health Center in November of 2018, and has begun testing early modalities of responding to referrals and clients in distress redirected from the clinic. From those early services, she has opened the Center of Healing Hearts, where she and two Peer Program Specialists provide a welcoming, homelike environment, and listening ears, which help determine what services are best utilized to respond to Round Valley Crisis needs. Early in the learning process, stakeholder feedback and community response indicated that use of the term "crisis" was a trigger for institutional distrust and historical trauma. The services that have been most useful are those that support protective factors; referral to resources, including counseling as well as providing a connection to traditional Native American healing practices and cultural skills. During this time, the program director has expanded community awareness of the project, strengthened involvement of local elders in the Innovation oversight group, and built connection with other local agencies that serve the community and are aware of crisis risk factors.

The extended time, will help us recover from the start up delays as well as further explore issues that have arisen during some of the initial learning related to trust and data collection. There is more to do to complete the learning goals originally proposed, both in terms of fully exploring the needs and

potentials for crisis response and crisis prevention in the community, and for discovering effective ways for building and maintaining trust, overcoming some of the ingrained impacts of a traumatic history. Because of the early delays, there are previously approved unspent funds that will be sufficient to support the project through the additional period requested. The initial plan was for three years, which would end in January of 2021. Our request is to continue through June 30, 2022.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karen A. Lovato", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Lovato, Acting Deputy Director
Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency
707-472-2342
lovatok@mendocinocounty.org.

cc: Wendy Desormeaux, MHSOAC Staff Mental Health Specialist
Jenine Miller, Psy.D., Mendocino County HHS, Behavioral Health Director
James Russ, Executive Director, Round Valley Indian Health Center (RVIHC)
Gerrilyn Reeves, RVIHC Manager, Innovation Crisis Response, Center of Healing Hearts
Colleen Gorman, Mendocino County BHRS, MHS, Program Administrator
Rena Ford, Mendocino County BHRS, MHS, Program Specialist