



STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL

DATE: March 2, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

FROM: Linda Smith, City Manager

SUBJECT: Funding Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding for Axis Community Health's Mental Health Urgent Care Pilot Project
Prepared by: Linda Smith, City Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City Council will consider authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Funding Agreement with Axis Community Health, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding with the cities of Pleasanton and Livermore, to provide funding to the proposed Mental Health Urgent Care pilot project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, authorize the City Manager to enter into the Funding Agreement with Axis Community Health and the Memorandum of Understanding with the cities of Pleasanton and Livermore.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The cost to fund a one-year pilot project is approximately \$277,126. There is also an anticipated start-up cost of \$44,369. The total project cost is \$321,495; of this amount, \$250,000 is expected to be offset by a grant from Alameda County Behavioral Health. The cities of Dublin, Pleasanton and Livermore will split the remainder of costs at \$23,831.67 each. The City of Dublin has adequate funding available in the current operating budget to cover this expense.

DESCRIPTION:

Background

At its November 2020 meeting, the City Council received an overview of mental health resources available in the Tri-Valley region. The report included a list of providers and their related services. The report also included information on an opportunity to work with Axis Community Health on an innovative approach to address more immediate mental health needs, through the establishment of a regional Mental Health Urgent Care Center.

The COVID pandemic has exacerbated an already-increased need for mental health services in the

Tri-Valley. Healthcare providers, law enforcement, and schools agree that this issue needs to be addressed before it reaches a crisis point. And while there are traditional resources available, these options typically result in a delayed response to the person experiencing mental health challenges. It can take weeks to get an appointment or to navigate the insurance matters if they have insurance at all. The inability to conduct a timely assessment and identify a treatment plan often results in calls to 911, trips to the emergency room and, at times, voluntary or involuntary holds at John George Psychiatric Hospital. Additionally, the current behavioral health system is fragmented, affecting the ability to connect patients and their families with resources to help guide and support them in achieving wellness.

In an effort to address these issues, particularly the impact to law enforcement, the cities of Dublin, Pleasanton and Livermore began discussing mental health support options and held virtual meetings with Axis Community Health in the summer of 2020. Axis Community Health has been a long-standing health partner in the region and has a sizeable behavioral health program. The discussions were wide ranging and substantive, resulting in the proposal to establish of an urgent care center model for the region.

Proposal for Mental Health Urgent Care Center

Under the proposal, the Axis Mental Health Urgent Care Center will be available to all members of the community, regardless of income or insurance status. Individuals and families with urgent mental health needs will be able to call for same-day appointments via telehealth, and ultimately, in person subject to COVID conditions. The Center will serve as a central entry point for assessment, triage, treatment, and care coordination for anyone seeking mental health treatment, regardless of insurance type or status. Like a medical urgent care setting, the Center will provide assessment and timely connection to services, in a setting that is less costly to operate than an emergency department.

In terms of staffing, the Center will include a care coordinator, a licensed therapist, and an on-call psychiatrist. The service will be under the direction of Axis's Chief of Behavioral Health Services, who is a licensed psychologist. Staff will utilize mental health screening tools, conduct bio-psychosocial diagnostic assessments, and provide brief counseling and trauma treatment. Psychiatric care will be provided via telehealth for patients that require medication management, and patients will be connected to an ongoing treatment provider that is appropriate to their needs. Like medical urgent care, staff will see patients with an immediate need, and assist in coordinating care that connects patients (and families) to ongoing care with a provider and behavioral health support resources.

Axis is proposing to utilize a telehealth model as well as at its physical site at W. Las Positas Blvd. in Pleasanton. In the initial pilot, hours will be 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Monday through Friday, but could be expanded or modified, dependent upon funding availability and community need. Services would be available for ages 5 and above, and available to individuals, couples, and families.

It is anticipated that the Center would handle 15 to 20 care coordination visits per week, and an estimated 15 to 20 counseling visits per week. An estimated 500 unique patients would be served in year one, based upon 20 patients per week with an average of three to six visits per patient over

the course of several weeks as they get situated with a provider for longer term care.

Funding Partners

The cost to fund a one-year pilot project is approximately \$277,000. There is also an anticipated start-up cost of approximately \$44,000. This will provide Axis with two months of funding to mobilize for a full year of patient operations.

There are several funding partners for this proposal, including the largest contributor of Alameda County Behavioral Health (ACBH). ACBH awarded the pilot project with a grant of \$250,000. The cities of Dublin, Pleasanton and Livermore will split the remainder of the cost equally as outlined in the attached Memorandum of Understanding and summarized below. If the funding from ACBH does not ultimately materialize, the three cities would split the cost of the Center equally in the pilot project period. As proposed, the City of Dublin would serve as the fiscal agent and directly enter into the Funding Agreement with Axis.

Table 1: Fair Share Contributions by Cities

City	Fair Share Contribution (without grant approval)	Fair Share Contribution (with grant approval)
Dublin	\$107,165	\$23,831.67
Livermore	\$107,165	\$23,831.67
Pleasanton	\$107,165	\$23,831.67

Staff at the three cities and at Axis are also in preliminary discussions with local health care providers, such as Stanford, Sutter, and Kaiser to provide future financial assistance to the Center and to potentially work in partnership with Axis during and beyond the initial project year.

Staff is recommending that the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into the Funding Agreement with Axis and sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the other two cities to share in the funding of this effort.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

None.

NOTICING REQUIREMENTS/PUBLIC OUTREACH:

The City Council Agenda was posted.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Funding Agreement between the City of Dublin and Axis Community Health
- 2) Memorandum of Understanding between The City of Dublin, The City of Livermore, and the City of Pleasanton