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\$6.4 Million Grant Awarded For New Detoxification Facility

By *Bay City News Service*

July 27, 2023



By Prachi Singh

Bay City News

San Jose will have a new drug withdrawal management facility thanks to a \$6.4 million grant to Pathway Society, a local substance-use treatment nonprofit.

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) under its Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) awarded the grant last month to help fund a 30-bed, stand-alone facility adjacent to Pathway House, the nonprofit's residential substance-use treatment center in downtown San Jose.

According to a press statement from DHCS on June 23, BHCIP is part of a broader commitment of Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration to improve the state's behavioral health and continuous care infrastructure. The grants are aimed to target

various gaps in the state's behavioral health facility infrastructure through six rounds of funding.

This is the fifth round of grants and its focus was determined in part by a statewide needs assessment last year that found significant gaps in the availability of crisis services and advocated for continuing such services to help reduce emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and incarceration.

DHCS has awarded \$430 million for projects around the state that will increase mental health and substance use disorder treatment infrastructure in 21 counties.

"These investments will build crisis care capacity so Californians can get the help they need when it may be needed the most," Dr. Mark Ghaly, secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, said in a statement.

In San Jose, the funding will support the construction of a new three-story building dedicated to withdrawal management, freeing up that facility to be used exclusively for residential substance use treatment, where they currently offer detox as well.

"With the grant, the facility will grow in two ways at the same time, we'll be able to now increase residential capacity for substance use treatment and also double capacity for withdrawal management," said Gary Montrezza, CEO of Pathway Society. "It's a total win for us and for people and our clients in the community."

The detox capacity will be nearly doubled, from 16 beds to 30 beds, while residential treatment will increase by almost a quarter, to a total of 72 beds.

"Expanding treatment options for our most vulnerable residents is a key component of a multi-faceted approach to addressing homelessness," said Santa Clara County Supervisor Cindy Chavez in a statement.

Supervisor Otto Lee and board president Susan Ellenberg last year had urged the county to declare a mental health crisis and build capacity. According to Montrezza, as a nonprofit with the most withdrawal management in the county, it was an opportunity to meet the need of the people.

"When people come in for detox that's a really bad part of a person's life. They're at a very low point, and our goal all along was to build a facility that's dedicated to the beginning of that journey. And make it a really soft landing for people," Montrezza said. "We can get everything they need before anyone says, 'hey, let's enroll you in withdrawal management.' We wanted to really make it a soft entry for people in a humane way and not clinical to come into our setting."

Construction on the new building is expected to begin in September and end by June 2024.

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July 27, 2023

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