

CARE Act Quarterly Implementation Update | September 2023

Much has happened since the CARE Act was signed by Governor Newsom on September 14, 2022. The first seven counties began handling CARE petitions on October 2nd, with Los Angeles following in December, and all 50 other counties in late 2024. Counties, courts, and state partners have rapidly put in place the systems to provide integrated, holistic care for CARE respondents.

This quarterly update provides an overview of progress made on CARE Act implementation for July-September 2023 and upcoming activities for the rest of the year, and then summarizes many of the resources and information recently developed to support CARE implementation.

CARE Implementation Activities – July-September 2023

Working Group



The third CARE Act Working Group meeting was held August 9th. Members received updates from CalHHS, DHCS, and the Judicial Council. Orange and Tuolumne Counties each provided members with summaries of their implementation and local engagement activities.

Dr. Sarah Vinson, a forensic psychiatrist, Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, and the Chair of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Morehouse School of Medicine, delivered a presentation on the social and cultural context related to the issues CARE is addressing and the challenges it is raising.

Christopher Schneiders (former Director of the Saks Institute at the University of Southern California, currently CEO of Schneiders and Co. Consultants) and Rayshell Chambers (Co-Founder

of Painted Brain) presented about supported decision-making, psychiatric advanced directives (PADs), and the role of the supporter. Members were invited to provide feedback on several draft communication tools following the meeting.

During the previous meeting, the Working Group identified a need for ad hoc subgroups that can work deeply and efficiently on three initial areas of focus: Services & Supports, Training & Technical Assistance, and Data Collection, Reporting & Evaluation. To maximize the impact of these subgroups, they will encompass cross cutting perspectives from peers, family members, and others with lived experience; racial and social justice; and providers. The Co-Chairs of each group provided updates about their planning activities. Each group is expected to convene prior to the next Working Group meeting in November.

Public comment focused on the importance and complexity of serving those eligible for CARE, as well as the importance of including perspectives of those with lived experience and family members.

More information can be found on the CARE Act Working Group [website](#). These meetings will continue quarterly through 2026.



Support for Counties

On July 14, CalHHS hosted Cohort 1 Counties and Los Angeles for a fourth day long in-person working meeting focused on implementation, data collection, and outreach and communication strategies. Counties remain on track for implementation, noting the volume of behavioral health change activities underway, including and beyond CARE.

On September 6, DHCS announced the second batch of awards for their first round of [Behavioral Health Bridge Housing \(BHBH\) Program](#) funding, an additional \$119,495,976 to 12 counties. This brings the total awards under the BHBH Program to \$897,094,850.

The BHBH Program prioritizes serving the needs of individuals that participate in CARE. These investments will help address housing instability and homelessness for individuals with serious behavioral health conditions, including serious mental illness (SMI) and/or a substance use disorder (SUD), by providing support through various "bridge" housing settings, including tiny homes, interim housing, rental assistance models, and assisted living settings. Also, bridge housing settings include voluntary supportive services to help program participants obtain and maintain housing, manage symptoms of serious behavioral health conditions, and support recovery and wellness. Cohort 1 counties have now received \$146,871,514 and LA an additional \$321,189,238 in BHBH funding.



On September 8, CalHHS convened Cohort 1 Counties and Los Angeles for a fifth day long in-person working meeting focused on implementation, data collection, and outreach and communication strategies. Counties emphasized being on track for implementation, noting the volume of behavioral health change activities underway, including and beyond CARE.

On September 19, DHCS and HMA released a draft of the finalized data dictionary and associated Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN). Training will be provided for counties and courts in coordination with JC.

On September 21 and September 28, CalHHS, DHCS, JC, and HMA hosted "Office Hours" for Cohort 1 counties and courts. These office hours will be ongoing during the early weeks of implementation.

Upcoming HMA trainings will focus on county and court data collection and reporting.



Courts and Legal Services

On August 10, the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission (LSTFC) approved grants to two qualified legal services projects (QLSPs) to represent respondents in San Francisco County. In addition to these two QLSPs, eight public defender offices will receive funding: Glenn, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne. This means that in San Francisco, respondents may be represented by either of the two QLSPs, or a public defender. In the other counties,

respondents will be represented by the public defender.

CARE forms, including the petition, became available for the public on the [Judicial Council](#) site on September 1, along with a [How to File the CARE 100](#) Infographic for petitioners. CalHHS has established an [Information for Petitioners Site](#) as well as a 1-Page [Information Flyer for CARE Act Petitioners](#).

On September 26, the Judicial Council provided a CARE Act Judicial Process Overview Training for Counsel, for an audience of County Counsel, Public Defenders, Qualified Legal Service Providers, Attorneys.



Community Updates and Other Implementation Activities:

On July 5, DHCS began reviewing responses to a [Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) for the CARE Act independent evaluation.

HMA has identified Painted Brain as the Peer Support subcontractor to assist with training content review and feedback, contribute to resource development and provide other support to trainings and TA as requested.

On September 14, the legislature approved [Senate Bill 35](#) which includes amendments to clarify the CARE Act.

As detailed at the beginning of this quarterly update, over the last few months, HMA hosted a variety of trainings for all counties, counsel, judges, county providers, and other stakeholders participating in CARE Act implementation, including:

- [Psychiatric Advance Directives \(PADs\)](#)
- [Supported Decisionmaking & The CARE Act](#)

- [The Supporter Role In The CARE Act](#)
- [Supported Decisionmaking For Volunteer Supporters](#)
- [Maintaining Neutrality As A Volunteer Supporter](#)

These are available on the [CARE Act Resource Center](#), with additional training, technical assistance, and resources for CARE Act stakeholders.

Upcoming trainings also include:

- Trauma Informed Care
- Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders & Evidence-based Care
- Person- and Family-centered Care and Peer Support
- Lessons learned from Cohort 1: A review of year 1 with the CARE Act

Resource Summary

Sources for Information



[CalHHS CARE Act Site](#) and [CARE Act Overview](#) (updated August 2023)



[Judicial Council CARE Act Site](#)



[CARE Act Resource Center \(managed by HMA for DHCS\)](#)

[DHCS CARE Act Site](#)

Petition Information and CARE Process Flow



[CalHHS Information for CARE Act Petitioners Website](#) and [One-Page Information Flyer for CARE Act Petitioners](#)



[CARE Act Process Flow Overview](#)

Key Petition Forms



[How to File the CARE-100](#)



[Petition Form \(CARE-100\)](#)



[Mental Health Declaration Form \(CARE-101\)](#)



[Information for Petitioners \(CARE-050-INFO\)](#)

CARE Briefs



[Legal Roles In The CARE Act](#): This brief provides information about specific legal roles throughout the CARE Act civil court process, including counsel representing the respondent, judicial officers, and legal representation for the petitioner.



[Supporter Role In The CARE Act](#): This brief helps explain the principles, roles, and trainings available for supporters. In the CARE process, each individual respondent can choose a supporter. The supporter is an adult that partners with the respondent, counsel, Behavioral Health Agency, and judges and ensures that the CARE process reflects the respondent's rights and choices.

CARE Training Materials



[Psychiatric Advance Directives \(PADs\)](#): This training reviews the

background, purpose, and evidence of psychiatric advance directives (PADs). Additionally, it discusses the when, who, how, and what of PADs in the CARE Act process.



[Supported Decisionmaking & The CARE Act](#): This session provides an introduction to supported decisionmaking (SDM), including a discussion of principles of SDM, the concepts of a decisionmaking network, and how SDM works within the CARE proceedings.



[The Supporter Role In The CARE Act](#): This training explores the role of a volunteer supporter through a case study and outlines the CARE Act volunteer supporter role, requirements, and components.



[Supported Decisionmaking For Volunteer Supporters](#): This session defines supported decisionmaking and highlight its key concepts and principles. It also outlines the responsibilities of the supporter to support decisionmaking and discuss a scenario that provides an example of how one may support the individual to make their own decisions under an SDM framework.



[Maintaining Neutrality As A Volunteer Supporter](#): This training discusses the relationship between the volunteer supporter and the client/respondent. It also reviews the importance of a volunteer supporter to fully support a client/respondent's self-determination.

2023 Milestones and Activities – CARE Act Implementation

Q1 2023

- CalHHS hosted first CARE Act Working Group convening
- DHCS released RFA for county Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH funding)
- DHCS CARE Act TA vendor contract executed
- JC accepted public comment on Rules and Forms through January
- Cohort 1 Counties convened March 10

Q3 2023

- CARE Act Working Group met August 9
- Cohort 1 Counties convene on July 14 and September 8
- DHCS evaluation vendor selected
- Additional DHCS TA materials developed; TA activities continue

Q2 2023

- DHCS released RFI for evaluation
- DHCS launched CARE Act TA website
- Initial DHCS TA materials developed and distributed and TA activities began
- DHCS awarded county BHBH funding
- CARE Act Working Group met May 17
- Cohort 1 Counties convened on May 19
- JC adopted CARE Act Rules and Forms

Q4 2023

- Cohort 1 begins October 1
- Cohort 1 Counties convene November 3
- CARE Act Working Group meets November 8
- Data collection/reporting commences for annual reports and evaluation
- DHCS will release RFA for additional BHBH funding
- Los Angeles County begins December 1