

# CARE Act Quarterly Implementation Update | December 2023

With the launch of the CARE Act in the seven Cohort 1 counties on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and Los Angeles on December 1<sup>st</sup>, counties, courts, and state partners are working to collaboratively implement the systems needed to provide integrated, holistic care for CARE respondents. Based on preliminary data, nearly 200 petitions have been filed in the eight counties between October 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 29<sup>th</sup>. In addition, many seeking assistance via CARE were able to be connected voluntarily to services without a petition being filed. The petition numbers during this early implementation stage are in line with expectations and allow the courts and counties to effectively manage the resources needed to serve the population. This provides the opportunity for counties to identify the necessary resources to build comprehensive CARE plans, including identifying housing solutions that meet client needs.

Counties are actively working to locate and engage respondents, investigate and file initial reports, coordinate services, and support petitioners. Initial hearings are being conducted and counties report that some respondents have engaged voluntarily and may exit the court process, while others are moving toward CARE agreements or plans.

This quarterly update provides an overview of progress made on CARE Act implementation for October–December 2023, summarizes many of the resources and information developed to support CARE implementation, and includes a timeline of upcoming activities for 2024. Based on early implementation data, CalHHS projected that over 2,000 individuals will be served by the end of 2024.

## CARE Implementation Activities – October–December 2023

### Launch



CARE programs are up and running in eight counties, including San Diego where an October [KPBS story](#) focused on a father and daughter's hope the CARE Act will change their lives. "I feel that the CARE Court is going to... give her that hope that she may not have at this time," Timothee said.



## Working Group



On November 8<sup>th</sup>, representatives from the CARE Act Working Group came together in Sacramento to share information and collaborate on the implementation of the CARE Act.

The group discussed updates from state partners, a presentation on serving those eligible for CARE from Dr. Katherine Warburton, Cohort 1 implementation updates, and reports from the Ad Hoc Sub-Group co-chairs (Training, Technical Assistance, and Communication; Data Collection, Reporting, and Evaluation; and Services and Supports).

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

To expand participation by key stakeholders, subject matter, experts, and the public, CalHHS convened three virtual ad hoc subgroups of the CARE Working group, focused on 1.) Data Collection, Reporting, and Evaluation (Data and Evaluation); 2.) Services and Supports; and 3.) Training, Technical Assistance, and Communication

(TTA/Comms). Each group includes perspectives from peers with lived experience, families, and providers.

October meetings covered group goals and member roles and included a presentation on the CARE Act population characteristics and treatment strategies. Meeting attendees included group members and stakeholders (Data and Evaluation =

*We have a long history of operating successful collaborative courts, and this is one more opportunity for us to build the bridges and networks between the public defender, county counsel, behavioral health, court, and other justice and service partners.*

...

*I think that the visibility that has come from CARE Act is and will continue to help us reach out into parts of our community that we haven't connected with previously.*

--Marcus Cannon, Riverside County Health System (during November 8<sup>th</sup> CARE Act Working Group Meeting)

78; Services and Supports = 62; and TTA/Comms = 127).

During the Data meeting, Health Management Associates (HMA), a

contractor of the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) provided updates on CARE Act data collection and reporting. The Services and Supports group discussed strategies for outreach and engagement for both petitioners and respondents. The TTA/Comms group engaged in a discussion of existing resources and what types of CARE information members feel needs to be communicated and to what audiences.

In December, 35 stakeholders attended the Data group for a deeper conversation with HMA about the data collection and reporting details. 40 stakeholders attended the TTA/Comms group for an in-depth discussion of considerations for a “client journey” resource to provide clear information about CARE, particularly for respondents.

All three groups will meet in January and throughout 2024. More information can be found on the CARE Act Working Group [website](#).



## Cohort 1 County Site Visits

Beginning in November, CalHHS and state partners began visiting Cohort 1 counties to learn firsthand how the implementation of CARE is progressing.

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, staff traveled to San Diego County to discuss the ongoing rollout of CARE with local implementation partners. Staff also visited a housing site with supportive services to assist clients on a path to recovery and housing stability.



On November 29<sup>th</sup>, state partners visited Tuolumne County and learned about local efforts to meet the holistic care needs of clients and toured the county's first navigation center funded in part by CARE Act start-up resources.



On December 14<sup>th</sup>, CalHHS and other state partners visited Riverside County for an on the ground view of CARE implementation activities.



Staff met with judges and court leaders, visited a residential facility and nearby housing, and saw how a broad local continuum of services and supports can benefit CARE respondents, petitioners, and families. Riverside County showcased their mobile vans which will support virtual hearings.



Key promising practices shared during the site visits included using CARE as a diversion from or step down from conservatorships, innovative models to bring hearings into community settings, expanded Self Help legal services, collaborative outreach and engagement strategies, and creative adaptive reuse approaches to create new housing settings.

Additional site visits will take place in early 2024 for Cohort 1 and Los Angeles.



## Support for Counties

On October 5, DHCS released the finalized CARE [Data Dictionary](#) which describes the comprehensive data to be collected and reported by counties and an associated [Behavioral Health Information Notice \(BHIN\)](#). Training will be provided for counties and courts in coordination with the Judicial Council. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, HMA hosted a training on utilizing the CARE data dictionary and reporting tool.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, CalHHS hosted Cohort 1 Counties and Los Angeles for a sixth, day long in-person working meeting focused on implementation, data collection, and outreach and communication strategies.

On December 14<sup>th</sup> the DHCS Local Governmental Financing Division conducted a training on CARE Act Claiming and Sanctions Processes for counties.

Throughout October and November CalHHS, DHCS, the Judicial Council, and HMA hosted "Office Hours" for Cohort 1 counties and courts.

Upcoming HMA trainings will focus on county and court data collection and reporting. (See training library in the resource section below.)



## Courts and Legal Services

On October 13<sup>th</sup> the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission (LSTFC) approved an award of \$254,850 to the Office of the State Public Defender for legal training and technical assistance for respondents' counsel. The State Bar continues to support data collection and reporting for public defenders and two qualified legal services projects (QLSPs) representing respondents in San Francisco County.

Judicial Council staff met with court data specialists in counties implementing CARE in 2023 to review data collection protocols and align measurement methods.



### Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688  
[www.courts.ca.gov/policyadmin-invitationstocomment.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/policyadmin-invitationstocomment.htm)

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## INVITATION TO COMMENT

W24-03

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On December 12<sup>th</sup>, the Judicial Council invited comment on revisions to various CARE rules and forms to reflect recent legislative updates. Comments must be submitted by 5:00 pm, on January 19, 2024. The CARE Act Rule Amendments and Form Revisions are posted for public comment [here](#).

CARE forms, including the petition, remain available for the public on the [Judicial Council](#) site, 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](#).

## Community Updates and Other Implementation Activities



On October 19<sup>th</sup>, DHCS presented updates on CARE implementation to the DHCS Behavioral Health Stakeholder Advisory Committee, a broad-based body to disseminate information and receive coordinated input regarding behavioral health activities.

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, CalHHS and DHCS provided CARE implementation updates for the California Behavioral Health Planning Council.



Painted Brain continues working with HMA as the Peer Support subcontractor, assisting with training content review and

feedback, contributing to resource development and providing other support to trainings and technical assistance as requested.

NAMI California has created a [website](#) which includes information to navigate the CARE process and has convened family members and stakeholders as well as local NAMI affiliates who are distributing CARE information through local newsletters.



HMA released a [Volunteer Supporter Toolkit](#) and continues hosting a variety of trainings for all

counties, counsel, judges, county providers,

and other stakeholders participating in CARE Act implementation, including:



[CARE Act Process Flow Overview](#)

- [Addressing Implicit Bias for Behavioral Health Agencies](#)
- [Role of the Family in the CARE Process](#)
- [Part 1: Trauma-Informed Care \(TIC\) & Organizational Considerations for Behavioral Health Agencies](#)
- [Part 2: Incorporating Trauma-Informed Care into the CARE Process for Behavioral Health Agencies](#)
- [Part 3: Workforce Sustainability with Trauma-Informed Care for Behavioral Health Agencies](#)
- [Overview of CARE Process for Supporters](#)

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

## Resource Summary



[CalHHS CARE Act Site](#) and [CARE Act Overview](#)



[Judicial Council CARE Act Site](#)



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



[DHCS CARE Act Site](#)



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

## 2024 Milestones and Activities – CARE Act Implementation

### January–March 2024

- Kickoff webinars for Cohort 2 Courts and County BH (January)
- Working Group meets 2/14; ad hoc groups meet in January and March
- CalHHS and partners complete Cohort 1 site visits
- Cohort 2 Toolkit and other updates posted to the CARE Act Resource Center
- CalHHS posts quarterly update on CARE Act website (March)

### July–September 2024

- Working Group meets 8/21; ad hoc groups meet in July and September
- CalHHS posts quarterly update on CARE Act website (September)

### April–June 2024

- Working Group meets 5/15; ad hoc groups meet in April and June
- CalHHS posts quarterly update on CARE Act website (June)

### October–December 2024

- Working Group meets 11/6, ad hoc groups meet in October and December
- Cohort 2 begins 12/1
- Early Implementation Legislative Report due 12/1 (Reporting Period 10/1/2023–6/30/2024)
- CalHHS posts quarterly update on CARE Act website (December)

Ongoing training and technical assistance in coordination with initiatives such as CalAIM Justice Initiative, California BH Community-Based Continuum Waiver, Mobile Crisis Benefit, BH Bridge Housing, and BH