

NEWS

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Board approves integrated healthcare for county residents

The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a plan to create a more coordinated, effective and cost-efficient healthcare system for residents of San Bernardino County.

Known as the Integrated Healthcare Project, the plan calls for the integration of services currently provided by the county's Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, Department of Behavioral Health, and Department of Public Health.

"Pooling the resources of ARMC, DBH, and DPH will allow the County to synergize our various health services, potentially reducing costs and providing a much more coordinated and efficient healthcare system to county residents," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary Ovitt.

These integrated services will be delivered through a network of healthcare centers that will be strategically located throughout the county. The first integrated healthcare center is expected to be opened within two years in San Bernardino.

"The pilot will allow for a full range of convenient community services with increased public accessibility," said Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Josie Gonzales. "I am proud that the residents in my district will be the first recipients of these much-needed integrated healthcare services."

"This project will create a health care revolution in San Bernardino County that I hope will be mirrored in other jurisdictions across the country," said Supervisor Paul Biane, who as Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman worked with County Administrative Officer Mark Uffer to launch the initiative.

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With Tuesday's approval, The Board authorized the County's Real Estate Services Department to issue a request for proposals for the lease of approximately 41,000 square feet of office and medical space to house the first integrated clinic.

"This is an innovative approach to providing these important services to residents of this county," said ARMC Director, Patrick Petre. "Though the concept of providing all three services in one building is a simple one, it has taken extensive planning to make it happen."

"Ultimately, it will have tremendous benefits for residents who rely on the county for their health care," Petre said.

ARMC will provide primary care services for all ages, Behavioral Health will provide assistance with short-term mental health issues, and Public Health services will include reproductive and maternal health, immunizations, HIV and STD services and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. Additional services may be added based on need. In addition, the County's Human Services Department will have representatives at the clinic to screen and enroll eligible patients into the Medi-Cal health care coverage plan.

"Combining the services offered by several county departments in one location will increase accessibility and improve service delivery," said Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, who represents the County's desert regions. "I look forward to establishing similar facilities throughout the County."