

San Mateo County, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Purchase of New Building for South County Adult Clinic

September 2024

Request: Use MHSA funds to support the purchase of new building for the San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) South County Adult Clinic. The purchase is estimated to be \$7M-\$8M. Renovations/tenant improvements beyond the purchase price will be needed to most properties to ensure the property meets clinic requirements such as a medication rooms, sufficient private offices for therapy, compliance with HIPAA standards, Medi-Cal certification requirements, ADA, and any other County requirements. Renovations will run \$1M-\$2M.

Location: BHRS currently leases the property at 802 Brewster, Redwood City, CA, 94603. The lease expires March 31, 2026.

Operations: Although building's primary purpose is the mental health clinic, the Conservatorship and Patients' Rights teams are co-located at the site.

Current State: The property is old, many features are unable to be upgraded such as the elevator, and the property has persistent pest problems which are a public health issue.

Safety: The clinic operates on three floors which is not ideal for our clients as the elevator often needs repairs. It is also a safety issue as it cannot be retrofitted for a "lockout" system that prevents it from going to specific floors in the case of an emergency.

The reception area on the first floor is limited to a fully open security desk and a small, reception room that has one door. The reception room has a window to the lobby; however, in situations with disruptive clients, it is potentially dangerous for the administrative staff to be in a small room that has only one exit into the area where the client is. The walls are cinder block which prevents an additional door from being added to the reception room.

The third floor does not have a reception area which also poses potential threat to staff. Although the entrances to the private treatment and other areas are locked and require a staff escort, there is no effective way to monitor clients in this lobby.

Public Health: Over the past three (3) years, there have been persistent pest issues that are creating public health hazards and affecting the health of staff and clients.

The specific issues and mitigations:

- Rodents in walls and ceilings
 - traps
- Flea infestation; Fall, 2023
 - Full chemical fumigation of building which required closing of clinic for three (3) weeks
 - Several staff filed Worker's Compensation claims related to impacts of fleas
 - Three staff had to get their homes treated for fleas due to cross-contamination from the clinic infestation

- Cockroaches, Summer, 2024
 - Infestation of cockroaches
 - Numerous mitigations were used including bait, traps, spraying, and fogging
 - Some staff filed Worker's Compensation claims for sensitivities/reactions to chemicals used in fogging treatment
- Fly swarms in the spring
 - Treated with zappers or chemicals
- Termites
 - Termites are observed at various times during the year despite continuous treatments
- All chemical treatment poses additional safety hazards for staff and clients due to potential chemical sensitivities

Relationship with Landlord: Although BHRS has leased the property for more than 15 years, it has been extremely difficult work with the landlord. The building is old and run down. Regular maintenance is not generally provided. It is often difficult to get the landlord to respond to facilities requests. Pest mitigation although responsibility of the landlord is being taken over by BHRS so that there is continuity and consistency in response. Termite control will remain the responsibility of the landlord.

Rent escalators: The leases have included annual lease escalators with no additional services or building upgrades. BHRS anticipates that the upcoming lease renewal rate will be significant and far beyond a reasonable rate for the property.

New Property: BHRS is actively looking for a new property to house the South County Adult Clinic and other programs. A new building will address:

- A new, first entrance reception area with multiple stations and entrance/exit points for staff, increasing stagey
- All maintenance will be taken over by the County Department of Public Works. This will ensure:
 - Quick response times to immediate problems
 - Regular maintenance
 - Addition to the County pest control contract which provides regular pest inspections and mitigation
- Reduction in pest problems which will in turn reduce potential public health issues and Worker's Compensation claims
- Long-term reduction in cost as the building will be purchased outright. There will be no lease escalators.
- Improved accessibility for clients and staff