



April 24, 2019

The Honorable Richard Pan, M.D.  
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3 on Health and Human Services  
State Capitol, Room 5114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Whole Person Care Funding Proposal – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Pan:

The County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), representing local health departments throughout our state, is pleased to SUPPORT the Administration's budget proposal for a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$100 million for Whole Person Care (WPC) Pilot Programs.

Since 2016, California's 25 WPC Pilot Programs have made considerable progress in addressing the unique and complex medical, behavioral, and social needs of our communities' most vulnerable residents. Local health departments have played a leading role in developing and implementing the WPC Program by employing innovative strategies to bridge gaps in care, coordinate services across provider and delivery systems, and provide a spectrum of support necessary to ensure positive health and social outcomes among WPC clients.

Many clients served by the WPC Program are homeless or unstably housed. WPC connects clients to critical supportive housing services, including housing navigators, assistance with security deposits and move-in fees, and support in maintaining relationships with landlords and/or property managers. However, housing has remained a challenge for WPC Pilots, largely due in part to federal limitations on using WPC funds for most types of housing interventions.

Given these challenges related to housing and supportive services, CHEAC strongly supports this budget proposal. To ensure that funding is most effective in securing urgently-needed housing options for individuals with complex behavioral, health, and social needs, we recommend providing greater flexibility to WPC Pilots in defining target populations for these proposed funds. As part of the initial application process, WPC Pilots identified target populations of high-risk, high-utilizing Medi-Cal beneficiaries with, among other criteria, two or more chronic conditions, repeated incidents of avoidable emergency use, hospital admissions, or nursing facility placement, mental health and/or substance use disorders, or those currently homeless or at-risk of homelessness. To avoid administrative challenges in reidentifying a target population or creating more restrictive parameters that may not entirely overlap with WPC target populations, we strongly recommend that WPC Pilots be allowed the discretion to identify populations that could most benefit from these funds.

CHEAC continues to analyze the allocation as proposed by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). We appreciate the proposed permissible expenditures of long-term and short-term housing, such as hotel vouchers and rental subsidies, as well as housing project capital investments. We would also recommend permitting expenditure of these funds on supportive housing services, such as housing navigation and tenancy sustaining supports, as well as stipends to assist with living and utility expenses.

The proposed allocation methodology also currently states that WPC Pilots demonstrating “unacceptable performance” in housing supportive services will not be eligible for funding. CHEAC would appreciate the opportunity provide input in determining how WPC pilot performance can be accurately evaluated.

Local health departments strongly support efforts to strengthen and expand upon the promising practices of California’s WPC Pilots related to health and housing services for our communities’ most vulnerable individuals and look forward to engaging further regarding the allocation of funds.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (916) 327-7540.

Sincerely,

*As signed by*

Michelle Gibbons  
Executive Director

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3  
Scott Ogus, Consultant, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3  
Anthony Archie, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus  
Jennifer Kent, Director, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)