



March 15, 2019

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes
Acting Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health and Human Services
State Capitol, Room 2175
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Whole Person Care Funding Proposal – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Gómez Reyes:

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 and recommends the following additional considerations and flexibilities:

All WPC Pilots can benefit from and stand ready to deploy these funds. Pilots throughout the state are designing and implementing interventions for vulnerable populations that lack stable housing, ranging from creating formal housing funding pools to offering housing supportive services and other wraparound strategies. These funds would allow all WPC Pilots to strengthen and expand strategies related to health and housing interventions, and Pilots are ready to quickly deploy these funds in their communities.

Create flexibility in identifying target populations. 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.

Flexible funding uses. WPC Pilots identified a series of potential uses for this one-time allocation of funds. We recommend permitting several broad categories of housing and housing-related uses, including but not limited to the following:

- Supportive housing services, such as housing navigation and tenancy sustaining supports
- Stipends to assist with living and utility expenses
- Rental subsidies
- Landlord/property management engagement and master-lease arrangements
- Capital expenditures for permanent, temporary, or transitional settings, such as medical respite centers that permit clients to leave an inpatient setting once their conditions are no longer acute
- Transitional stays in sober living environments when a client leaves substance use treatment, health facilities, or correctional facilities

Collaborative funding allocation. CHEAC requests that the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) work closely with our organization in determining an allocation methodology for California's WPC Pilots.

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. It is for these reasons that CHEAC strongly supports the Governor's budget proposal.

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, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health and Human Services
Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Cyndi Hillery, Budget Director, Assembly Republican Caucus
Jennifer Kent, Director, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)