



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/22/2025

File #: 25-524

To: Board of Supervisors

From: DHHS: Administration

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Approval of an Exception to the Hiring Freeze to Hire One Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Senior Medical Office Assistant for the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) - Behavioral Health (BH)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve an exception to the hiring freeze to fill and begin recruitment for the position of one Senior Medical Office Assistant (class 0575, salary range 377).

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Core Services/Other

Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:

On June 4, 2024, your Board approved a hiring freeze for positions allocated under a fund with a negative fund balance including the BH Fund - 1170. The department continually reevaluates staffing models to achieve the necessary workload and provide operational savings. The department has identified one classification in need of filling to efficiently provide services to the county and draw down revenue.

The Senior Medical Office Assistant position is an important leadership position providing various supportive services at Humboldt County Behavioral Health's Adult Outpatient and Crisis Services. This position supports the front desk reception coordinating client registration and scheduling, mailing patient packets, patient access, provider support and other various administrative duties including maintaining medical records and support for all DHHS-BH Programs, which is necessary in order to be able to draw down Medi-Cal revenue. BH has been navigating multiple existing vacancies within the unit. With an anticipated vacancy expected with notice of retirement scheduled in May of 2025, BH requests to fill one Senior Medical Office Assistant at this time to assist with the burden.

Therefore, DHHS recommends that your Board provide an exception to the hiring freeze for one Senior Medical Office Assistant for the current Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Mental Health Fund 1170-424, revenue line 507015, 507025, 507065

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenditures (Fund, Budget Unit)	FY24-25	FY25-26 Projected*	FY26-27 Projected*
Budgeted Expenses	\$10,127	\$72,411	\$79,652
Total Expenditures	\$10,127	\$72,411	\$79,652

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Funding Sources (Fund, Budget Unit)	FY24-25	FY25-26 Projected*	FY26-27 Projected*
State/Federal Funds	\$10,127	\$72,411	\$79,652
Total Funding Sources	\$10,127	\$72,411	\$79,652

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

The Senior Medical Office Assistant position resides in Fund 1170, Budget Unit 424 and is supported through Realignment (100%) funding. The position allocation and associated revenues and expenditures are included in the approved FY 2024-25 budget at \$65,827.84 for 1.0 FTE for the Senior Medical Office Assistant position. This total is based on a full year of salary and benefits. As this FY is nearing the fourth quarter, and the process to fill a recruitment takes time, fiscal projections assume an anticipated start date of May 11, 2025, if approved by your Board. It will be likely this current FY 2024-25 impact will be \$10,127 for 1.0 FTE.

There is no negative budget impact in FY 2024-25 as the positions that DHHS is requesting to fill are already budgeted for. DHHS has already taken steps to reduce hiring, make budget cuts, and reorganize the department's interdepartmental cost structures. Indications point to these budget reduction strategies reducing the fund balance deficits in the current fiscal year and eliminating them entirely in coming fiscal years.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Only vacated positions already budgeted in the adopted FY 2024-25 budget are being considered for filling, and only after ensuring the position would be utilized to meet mandates and allow for staff to continue to generate revenue.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board could choose not to allow recruitment for Senior Medical Assistant in the current FY, however, this is not recommended. Leaving this position unfilled could lead to lack of compliance with state mandates, a loss of federal and state claiming, and leaves DHHS vulnerable to non-compliance by not meeting internal staffing needs.

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: : N/A

File No.: N/A