



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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## **Riverside Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson Hails CARE Courts Becoming Law**

*New program designed to address issues with severe mental illness and substance abuse*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson, who has supported CARE Court legislation designed to address serious mental illness and substance abuse issues among people experiencing homelessness, said Gov. Newsom signing the bill into law yesterday (9/14) signifies a new approach to dealing with these serious issues.

“This is an important change to the status quo, in which people most in need are stuck in a cycle of homelessness and incarceration,” Lock Dawson said. “CARE Court is a way out of this cycle because it brings both healing and housing to people with untreated behavioral health and substance abuse issues. This is long overdue.”

Lock Dawson attended the signing ceremony yesterday in San Jose alongside Gov. Newsom and other local leaders. The Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment Act will provide help to people dealing with mental illness and substance abuse before they become incarcerated or institutionalized. Under CARE Court, families, clinicians, first responders and others will be able to refer individuals suffering from schizophrenia spectrum or psychotic disorders.

“With overwhelming support from the Legislature and stakeholders across California, CARE Court will now become a reality in our state, offering hope and a new path forward for thousands of struggling Californians and empowering their loved ones to help,” Governor Newsom said. “I thank our legislators and the broad coalition of partners who made this day possible and look forward to our work ahead together to implement this transformative program in communities across California.”

CARE Court will be implemented statewide. Riverside County is one of the first counties to implement the program, along with Glenn, Orange, San Diego, Stanislaus, Tuolumne and San Francisco counties.

Funding comes from the state’s \$15.3 billion investment in addressing homelessness, including \$1.5 billion for behavioral bridge housing; more than \$11.6 billion annually for mental health programs throughout California; and more than \$1.4 billion for the health and human services workforce. An

additional \$88.3 million in CARE Court start-up funds was provided for the state, counties, courts, self-help and legal aid.

CARE Court was created based on the evidence that people with untreated psychosis can be stabilized and housed in community-based care settings, with treatment and support. The plan focuses on people with schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders, who may also have substance use challenges.

CARE Court will provide individuals with clinically appropriate, community-based and court-ordered Care Plans consisting of culturally and linguistically competent county mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, according to the state. These include short-term stabilization medications, wellness and recovery supports, social services and housing.

Services are provided to the individual while they live in the community. Plans can be between 12-24 months. In addition to their full clinical team, the client-centered approach also includes a volunteer supporter to help individuals make self-directed care decisions, and an attorney.

“The compassionate thing is not to leave people on the street, unable to make basic decisions for themselves,” Lock Dawson said. “The compassionate thing is to provide an avenue out of this cycle, with people in need assisted by a volunteer supporter and an attorney, on top of their full clinical team. That is where change is going to occur.”

More information about the program can be found at: <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/care-court/>

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- [www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19](http://www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19)