

CALIFORNIA TO EXPAND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE IN OAKLAND

Project Will Serve 7,665 Individuals Annually

SACRAMENTO — As California continues to strengthen its behavioral health care system, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and Safe Passages today celebrated the ribbon cutting of a new Community Wellness and Youth Prevention Wellness Center in Oakland. Funded by almost \$9 million through the Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (<https://www.infrastructure.buildingcalhhs.com/>). (BHCIP) Round 4: Children and Youth, the center will offer community-derived models of mental health services to a projected 7,600 individuals annually in an outpatient setting.



Ribbon Cutting for the Safe Passages Community Wellness and Prevention Center

“The opening of the Safe Passages Community Wellness and Prevention Center is a powerful investment in the future of our children and youth. Every child has a right to the tools they need to reach their full potential,

regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or disability," said **DHCS Director Michelle Baass**. "We are supporting community-driven efforts that create safe, healing spaces where young people can access the care, support, and opportunities they need to thrive. This center will serve as a critical hub for early intervention and prevention, helping children and families build resilience and well-being that lasts a lifetime."

SAFE PASSAGES COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND PREVENTION CENTER: The center will provide mental health services for children and youth in Alameda County from birth to young adulthood, with a focus on high-risk populations. The expanded center will offer early childhood development programs that deliver maternal services and parenting education implemented by early childhood mental health professionals, which are community-derived, research-based, and proven as best practices. These programs include the Life Coaching Program, perinatal and early childhood mental health programs, parent-child psychotherapy, pregnant and postpartum programs, parenting programs, transitional youth development programs, individual and group counseling, and career exploration sessions.

"For more than 29 years, Safe Passages has been committed to breaking the cycle of poverty in our communities and to supporting families and youth to engage in the development of our own solutions and paths," said **Safe Passages CEO Josefina Alvarado Mena**. "This wellness center is a gathering space and safe haven where we can build community, share, and grow together."

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT: Nearly 1 in 13 California children and youth experience a serious emotional disturbance. Through BHCIP, DHCS awards eligible entities funding to construct, acquire, and expand properties and invest in mobile crisis infrastructure, helping communities meet rising demand and close historic service gaps. These investments are especially critical in rural communities, ensuring people can access timely, life-saving care without having to travel long distances.

BHCIP is part of California's ongoing commitment to expand behavioral health services for all Californians. DHCS has awarded \$1.7 billion in BHCIP competitive grants. In addition, DHCS is distributing up to \$4.4 billion in competitive Bond BHCIP funding, including \$3.3 billion for Round 1: Launch Ready. (<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/05/12/governor-newsom-announces-billions-of-dollars-for-behavioral-health-treatment-facilities-and-services-for-seriously-ill-and-homeless-thanks-to-prop-1/>). grants as part of Behavioral Health Transformation (/BHT/Pages/home.aspx), DHCS' work to implement Proposition 1 (<https://www.mentalhealth.ca.gov/>). DHCS recently released (<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/05/30/building-on-billions-announced-earlier-this-month-governor-newsom-makes-800-million-available-in-new-prop-1-grants/>). the Proposition 1 Bond BHCIP Round 2: Unmet Needs Request for Applications (RFA). (https://infrastructure.buildingcalhhs.com/bond_bhcip_round_2_rfa). Eligible organizations can apply for funding to construct, acquire, or rehabilitate properties that expand behavioral health services for Medi-Cal members and other Californians in need. DHCS will award more than \$800 million in grants to support community-based facilities for mental health and substance use disorder care.

ABOUT BHCIP ROUND 4: CHILDREN AND YOUTH: BHCIP Round 4

(<https://www.infrastructure.buildingcalhhs.com/grantees/children-and-youth/>), part of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (<https://cybhi.chhs.ca.gov/>), focuses not only on children and youth, but all Californians ages 25 and younger, including pregnant and postpartum women and their children and transition-age youth ages 16-25, along with their families. The 52 awards totaling \$480.5 million allow for new construction and expansion of multiple outpatient and residential facility types, including children's crisis residential programs, perinatal residential substance use disorder facilities, community wellness/youth prevention centers, and outpatient treatment for substance use disorder. Please see the BHCIP website (<https://www.infrastructure.buildingcalhhs.com/>) for more information about grant recipients and additional details about all BHCIP funding rounds.

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