



Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) – Innovation Project Brief

Project: Coastside allcove

Overview

- **BHSA Component:** Behavioral Health Services and Supports (BHSS)
- **Population Served:** Youth And Young Adults
- **Total Cost:** TBD
- **Duration of Project:** 5 years

Background

As part of the Prop. 1 behavioral health transformation, the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) prioritizes strategies to increase access to early intervention services for youth and young adults. The California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) has approved a statewide collaborative that supports counties to use MHSA Innovation (INN) funding to establish youth multi-service centers based on the allcove™ model. The allcove model, inspired by successful international integrated youth mental health models in Australia, Canada, and Ireland, creates stand-alone, “one-stop-shop” health centers for young people ages 12 to 25 to access support for mild to moderate needs with mental health, physical health, substance use, peer support, supported education and employment, and family support, as well as linkages to community referrals in the continuum of care for more intensive needs.

In early 2024, CoastPride, a nonprofit based in San Mateo County’s Coastside community, was awarded start-up funding from the MHSOAC to establish an allcove center in the city of Half Moon Bay (allcoveHMB) to reach youth and young adults on the coast. Local INN funding will supplement and support the delivery of early intervention services behavioral health services to youth and their families at the allcoveHMB.

The Challenge

In San Mateo County, as in the United States as a whole, there are dire concerns about the status of youth mental health. In October 2021, leading children’s health organizations declared a [National State of Emergency in Children’s Mental Health](#) and in December 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a [National Advisory on the youth mental health crisis](#). Youth and young adults are facing an unprecedented level of stress from causes including racism, violence, the climate crisis, cyberbullying, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a charged political climate around immigration and LGBTQ+ rights, all of which contribute to increased levels of chronic stress among youth, which in turn can lead to anxiety and depression.

An [allcove center](#) in the city of San Mateo was established in the fall of 2023 by Peninsula Health Care District. However, it is well known that San Mateo County’s coastside region is physically isolated from the central parts of the county and lacks equitable access to services. The coastside has long struggled with social and economic challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and the growing economic disparity in the Bay Area. Despite being situated in one of the



richest counties in the nation, the limited resources in this part of the county have limited access to mental health, substance use prevention and treatment, educational and employment opportunities, and other supportive services. Behavioral health inequities flow from this economic disparity, and while it is felt by all coastsiders, it disproportionately impacts residents of color and LGBTQ+ communities. Youth-led and community-defined evidence-based practices, such as allcove, are needed in order to reduce behavioral health disparities and advance behavioral health equity for young coastside residents.

The Proposed Project

The proposed project, and local INN funding, will support culturally informed community engagement and the behavioral health services provided at allcoveHMB including mental health support groups, individual therapy and other treatment services. The state grant funding will be used during the first two years of operation to support start-up costs including identifying a building, hiring and training staff, and planning for services. Specifically, the allcove ACCESS (Anti-racist, Culturally-minded, Community Education, Support, and Services) principles will be utilized to strengthen Latine and queer youth engagement to be truly reflective of the diverse community in the coast.

Target Population

The target population will be underserved youth 12 to 25 years of age living on the San Mateo County Coastside from Pacifica to Pescadero, including vulnerable youth populations such as those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+, and young people experiencing homelessness.

Services

allcoveHMB will be centrally located in Half Moon Bay. The center will provide:

- Holistic and coordinated services including mental health, substance use, job training, skill development, mentorship, and educational/social/arts activities
- Upstream, early intervention services that aim to positively alter even the most serious forms of mental illness through early detection and intervention
- Youth-centered approaches that focus on resilience and identity, and a youth-friendly physical space with accessible hours of operation
- Connections to community-based partners, including Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) and Youth Leadership Institute (YLI)

The Innovation

- **MHSA Innovative Project Category:** Introduces a new practice or approach to the overall mental health system, including, but not limited to, prevention and early intervention
- **MHSA Primary Purpose:** Increases access to mental health services to underserved groups

While the allcove™ model is supported by international best practices and shares the characteristics of integrated youth mental health centers worldwide, this INN project aims to pilot a new model adapted



to the U.S. and California, and the needs of local youth in diverse communities. All allcove centers will be part of a multi-county initiative to create a network of centers that test and develop the model together, benefiting from the combined efforts of cross-county experience and technical assistance from the Central allcove Team at the Stanford’s Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Learning Goals

As part of a multi-county initiative, allcove centers have common learning goals:

1. To learn about the efficacy of the allcove integrated youth mental health model in a local context, evaluating how:
 - a. allcove engages with young people and supports them in connecting to services when they want them, before a crisis, leading to better outcomes for youth and cost savings for communities.
 - b. allcove destigmatizes mental health and normalizes wellness and prevention and early intervention as important to everyone.
 - c. allcove reimagines mental health and wellbeing for young people.
2. To learn the benefits for youth and their families in accessing services from a network of centers who work collaboratively to adapt and test a new model within a multi-county and state initiative.

Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Transition

The project aligns with the county’s Prop.1 transition to BHSA by by expanding and increasing the types of early intervention strategies available to to children, youth and young adults through the prioritization of Early Intervention strategies. The project removes a barrier to accessing culturally informed, collaborative, and youth and family friendly services.

BHSA Transition Questions	Response
How does the proposal align with the BHSA reform?	The project focuses on early-life investments and strategies for youth and young adults 25 and younger, and their families to intervene in the early signs of mental illness or substance use.
Does it provide housing interventions for persons who are chronically homeless or experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness?	No
Does it support early intervention programs or approaches in order to prevent mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders from becoming severe and disabling?	Yes, the project provides early behavioral health services for youth.



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Does it support Full-Service Partnership efforts and services for individuals living with serious mental illness?	No
How will the County continue the project, or components of the project, after its completion without the ability to utilize certain components of MHSA funding for sustainability?	allcoveHMB will develop a sustainability plan that is vetted and informed by an established youth advisory group. The goal would be to leverage diversified funding for ongoing sustainability of the program including opportunities for Medi-Cal billing of approved services. Additionally, a proposal of continuation will be brought to the BHSA Community Program Planning (CPP) process for Behavioral Health Services and Supports - Early Intervention funding.
How does the project assist the county's transition to the behavioral health reform?	BHSA expands and increases the types of support available to children, youth and young adults through the prioritization of Early Intervention strategies. The project provides access to culturally informed, collaborative, and youth and family led services.