

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 2174 (Gallagher)
As Amended March 16, 2020
Majority vote

SUMMARY:

Permits the Counties of Yuba and Sutter to establish a joint homeless adult and family multidisciplinary personnel team (MDT) in order to facilitate the expedited identification, assessment, and linkage of homeless individuals to housing and supportive services.

Major Provisions

- 1) Allows Yuba and Sutter Counties to establish a joint homeless adult and family MDT with the goal of facilitating the expedited identification, assessment, and linkage of homeless individuals to housing and supportive services within either Yuba or Sutter County, and to allow provider agencies or MDT members to share confidential information for the purpose of coordinating housing and supportive services to ensure continuity of care.
- 2) Subjects a joint homeless adult and family MDT established between Yuba and Sutter Counties to all requirements and obligations of a homeless adult and family MDT, as established in current law.
- 3) Requires Yuba and Sutter Counties to adopt a joint protocol to govern the sharing of information that is in full compliance with the requirements and obligations for homeless adult and family MDT protocols, as described in current law.
- 4) Requires a joint protocol to be at least as restrictive of the sharing of confidential information as any protocol adopted pursuant to current law, as specified, for the sharing of confidential information by a homeless adult and family MDT comprised solely of members of either county individually.
- 5) Requires, if a city within the Counties of Yuba or Sutter requests to participate in a joint MDT, the counties to allow for the participation of appropriate city personnel, unless the counties determine that participation by the city would hinder compliance with the requirements and obligations set forth in current law, as specified, or would otherwise conflict with the counties' goals and objectives.

COMMENTS:

Homelessness in California: According to the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count conducted by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), on a single night in January 2019, 151,278 people experienced homelessness in California, which represents a 16% increase in homelessness since January 2018. Nationwide, 396,045 individuals were experiencing homelessness in January 2019; California, therefore, accounts for 33% of the nation's homeless population. The PIT count also found that, in January 2019, California's homeless population included 10,989 veterans, 39,275 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, 11,993 unaccompanied youth, and 22,501 families with children.

Multidisciplinary personnel teams: AB 1049 (Bader), Chapter 353, Statutes of 1987, permitted the use of MDTs to allow for a coordinated interagency response to elder and child abuse cases.

Prior to that, MDTs were a relatively new concept and had primarily existed as pilot projects administered at the county level. Specifically, child abuse MDTs were formed and operated at the county level and were enabled to share certain confidential information among team members in order to prevent, identify, and treat child abuse. MDTs also serve to facilitate coordination among the different participating agencies and entities to ensure decisions are made through a team decision-making process.

In 2017, AB 210 (Santiago), Chapter 544, Statutes of 2017, allowed counties to develop homeless adult and family MDTs in order to identify and assess individuals experiencing homelessness and link them to housing and supportive services. AB 210 also allowed certain entities, including mental health service providers, law enforcement, schools, and social services representatives, to participate in homeless adult and family MDTs. In 2019, AB 728 (Santiago), Chapter 337, Statutes of 2019, established, until January 1, 2025, a pilot program in the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Clara, and Ventura, to allow homeless adult and family MDTs established in these counties to have the goal of facilitating expedited identification, assessment, and linkage of individuals at risk of homelessness to housing and supportive services, and the goal of facilitating the expedited prevention of homelessness for those individuals.

Need for this bill: The provisions of this bill seek to build upon previous efforts to address California's homelessness crisis, including the enactment of AB 210 and AB 728, which allowed counties to form homeless adult and family MDTs in order to link individuals who are homeless, or who are at risk of homelessness, to housing and supportive services. Specifically, this bill would permit the Counties of Yuba and Sutter to establish a joint homeless adult and family MDT to allow MDT members to share certain confidential information in order to quickly link people experiencing homelessness with housing and supportive services.

Staff comments: The provisions of this bill seek to further the ongoing efforts to address California's homelessness crisis by allowing Yuba and Sutter Counties to establish a joint homeless adult and family MDT and allow MDT members to share information and link individuals who are experiencing homelessness to supports and services. This bill expands upon the efforts of previous legislation, including AB 210 (Santiago) and AB 728 (Santiago) to increase collaboration between local entities to prevent and address homelessness on California's streets. This committee's analysis of AB 210 and AB 728 raised issues related to the sharing of private and confidential information and what impact, if any, legislation allowing information sharing would have on the rights of an individual. Neither current law, nor the provisions of this bill allow for an individual to consent to having their information shared or discussed. This bill also does not allow for an individual to opt out of having their information shared. While California is facing a homelessness crisis and it is imperative that the state provide for the housing, health, and mental health needs of these individuals, it is equally important to maintain an individual's right to privacy, as well as their ability to make informed decisions for themselves. *Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider the balance between maintaining the confidentiality of information and protecting the privacy rights of individuals experiencing homelessness, and providing services and supports to those individuals.*

According to the Author:

"Unfortunately, current law limits the utilization of homeless MDTs to providers within a single county. This can be problematic for counties that wish to better coordinate services across county lines for their homeless populations, like Yuba and Sutter counties. Coordination makes a lot of

sense for these counties, as they share homeless service providers, have a bi-county health department, and created a bi-county homeless consortium. However, under current law, MDTs may only be formed within a single county. This hinders current efforts to provide housing and supportive services to homeless individuals, which are especially critical to containing COVID-19.

"Authorizing Yuba and Sutter counties to establish a joint MDT would help with the identification, assessment, and linkage of homeless individuals to housing and supportive services. This will create cost savings and improve government efficiency by preventing duplicative efforts through better coordination, while enhancing the continuity of care for homeless individuals and families."

Arguments in Support:

The County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA) writes, "More than 151,278 individuals were experiencing homelessness in California in the January 2019 Point in Time count. Some of these individuals suffer from chronic health, mental health, and substance use disorders, often co-occurring, and some have history in the criminal justice system. Without support, these factors make it difficult to coordinate and sustain housing. Establishing a joint homeless adult and family MDT for the counties of Yuba and Sutter allows coordination between the two neighboring counties for enhanced coordination of services and resources to individuals experiencing homelessness. For these reasons, we urge your support on [this bill]."

Arguments in Opposition:

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS:

This bill has been keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

VOTES:

ASM HUMAN SERVICES: 8-0-0

YES: Reyes, Mathis, Arambula, Flora, Friedman, Gipson, Maienschein, Mark Stone

UPDATED:

VERSION: March 16, 2020

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