

CARE Court Community Listening Session FAQ: October 15, 2024

1. What type of housing will be available for individuals under CARE? Is there enough affordable housing available for individuals under the CARE process?
 - a. As a part of the CARE Act, the state government awarded counties with funds for Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH). The CARE clients have priority access to the BHBH housing programs.
 - i. See reference:
 - [SacCounty Awarded \\$15M for Bridge Housing](#)
 - [Behavioral Health Bridge Housing](#)

2. What happens to individuals who have been homeless for a long time and do not have a formal diagnosis?
 - a. There are various eligibility factors that are considered for each individual referred for CARE Court.
 - i. Housing insecurity is not a criterion required for CARE participation and being unhoused alone does not mean they will qualify for CARE.
 - ii. A diagnosis within the schizophrenia spectrum disorder is required.
 - b. Following the SB42 amendment to CARE, an eligible petitioner does not need proof of diagnosis if there is suspicious of a qualifying diagnosis, given the information gathered, including records or other information on the CARE Form 101.
 - i. See Reference:
 - [CARECourt_PetitionersGuide.pdf](#)
 - [SB 42 CARE Amendments](#)

3. How can individuals with severe mental health needs, such as those experiencing psychosis, access the resources they need?
 - a. Individuals with severe mental health needs can call the Sacramento County Behavioral Health Access team to be linked to mental health services:

Monday - Friday, 8 am - 5 pm (24/7 for Mental Health Crisis Calls)
(916) 875-1055 or toll free (888) 881-4881
Fax (916) 875-1190

<https://dhs.saccounty.gov/BHS/Pages/Mental-Health-Services.aspx>

If an individual believes they meet eligibility for CARE Court and are interested in participating, they can submit a petition using the Self-Help Center:

In-person at the Hall of Justice Building,
813 6th Street, on the first floor in Room 117

Open 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1:30 to 4 p.m. Monday – Friday;
closed 1:30 to 4 p.m. Thursdays and [court holidays](#).

By telephone: (916) 874-1421

By Email: CivilSelfHelp@saccourt.ca.gov

or file online <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/civil/care-act-court.aspx>

- b. The Sacramento County CARE team consists of licensed mental health professionals, license waived mental health professionals, behavioral health peer specialists. This team assists people with accessing the CARE program and providing referrals to other programs for people who do not qualify for CARE.
 - c. Clients who meet criteria will enter into a CARE Agreement or CARE Plan. The main treatment services are delivered through a Full-Service Partnership (FSP) Program.
 - i. For an overview of FSP level Services please follow this link:
 - [SacCounty Behavioral Health Serving Those in Need](#)
4. Are there enough services and funding available for clients under the CARE process?
- a. CARE Court clients will have access to the full array of mental health and substance use treatment services in the adult continuum of care.
 - b. The framework is supported by unprecedented funding under the State’s investment in addressing homelessness, including funding for: Behavioral Health Bridge Housing; mental health programs; our CARE Court staffing. Start-up funds were provided for counties, courts, self-help and legal aid to implement the CARE program.
 - i. See reference:
 - [Governor Newsom Signs CARE Court Into Law, Providing a New Path Forward for Californians Struggling with Serious Mental Illness | Governor of California](#)
5. If a person does not participate and is referred back to criminal court, can they be referred again to CARE Court later?
- a. Individuals with criminal justice involvement who are referred to Criminal Court due to lack of participation in the CARE Court program remain eligible for future petition to participate in the CARE Court program.
 - b. CARE Court is a Civil Court process – individuals participating may or may not have a concurrent criminal court process. Only specific criminal courts may refer to CARE Court.
 - i. See reference re: SB 1400
 - [Governor Newsom signs legislation to strengthen mental health and substance use disorder care for all Californians | Governor of California](#)
6. What happens when the client finishes the CARE Court Program?
- a. The primary goal of the CARE Act is to provide treatment and stabilization for people with schizophrenia spectrum disorders.
 - b. At the conclusion of the program, each client creates a graduation plan with their treatment team. This graduation plan will be individualized and meet the specific needs of that client. This plan may include a Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD).
 - i. See reference:
 - [The Client's Journey Through the CARE Act](#)
 - [Psychiatric Advance Directive](#)

7. Will treatment and resources be delivered in a timely manner?
 - a. There are strict guidelines on when the County BHS CARE team will engage in offering services and support to CARE participants.
 - b. When the minute order is received from CARE Court, County BHS CARE team will have 30 court days to investigate and provide a report to the CARE Court.
 - c. When clients enter into a CARE Plan or CARE Agreement, they will begin services with an FSP
 - i. See reference:
 - [The Client's Journey Through the CARE Act](#)
8. How does the CARE process balance coercion and voluntary participation?
 - a. The CARE process is a completely voluntary program. Individuals may choose not to participate in treatment.
 - b. The law requires County BHS to offer and provide the full array of mental health and substance use treatment services in the adult continuum of care.
9. What is the process for clients who require medication for managing their psychosis?
 - a. As part of the CARE Agreement or CARE Plan medication management may be recommended. Client's voice and choice will be honored.
 - b. CARE Agreements and CARE Plans will include various services, including medication management, that are provided by a Full-Service Partnership (FPS) program.
 - i. For an overview of FSP level Services please follow this link:
 - [SacCounty Behavioral Health Serving Those in Need](#)
10. How long is the engagement process for individuals who are difficult to reach?
 - a. There is not a defined number of minimum or maximum attempts to engage a client in the CARE process.
11. What is the overall CARE process from initial petition to service connection?
 - a. See reference:
 - [The Client's Journey Through the CARE Act](#)
12. How can non-profit organizations and homeless service agencies connect or refer individuals to CARE Court?
 - a. These organizations may be eligible to be a petitioner.
 - b. The Sacramento County Self- Help Center will be available to support petitioners.
 - c. See reference:
 - [Petitioners - CARE Act Resource Center](#)
 - [Sacramento County Self-Help Center](#)
13. Why is bipolar disorder not included in the CARE Court criteria, and how should this be communicated to families?
 - a. The law was written to state that only a person with a schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorder is eligible for the CARE Act process. A person who does

not have that diagnosis is not eligible even if they have a different serious mental disorder, such as bipolar disorder or major depression.

- b. People without a schizophrenia diagnosis may qualify for other programs.
 - i. See reference:
 - [Information for Petitioners](#)
 - [CARE Act Eligibility Criteria](#)

14. Do conditions like dementia or Alzheimer's need to be co-occurring with another serious mental illness (SMI) to qualify for CARE Court?

- a. Clients must have a primary diagnosis on the schizophrenia spectrum or other eligible psychotic disorders to qualify for CARE.
- b. Additional diagnoses are not necessarily exclusionary but cannot be the primary diagnosis.
 - i. See reference:
 - [Information for Petitioners](#)

15. If someone has been engaged in the CARE petition process and then engages in the treatment plan voluntarily, are they still monitored by the court somehow?

- a. If an individual agrees to voluntary treatment during the BHS investigation, then the Court can dismiss at the initial hearing and BHS will connect the client to a service provider within the Mental Health Plan...
- b. Yes, once an individual is accepted to the CARE Court program, they will continue to be part of the Court program for the first year with a possible extension for a second year.
- c. BHS will continue to monitor all CARE Court participants for an additional year after they are closed to the CARE Court Program.
- d. BHS will continue to monitor them and their engagement with their assigned provider and can step in and re-petition on behalf of the client if they disengage.

16. The phrase "Participant may participate in CARE Agreement or CARE Plan for up to 24 months or on-going treatment, supportive services, and housing in the community." The use of "may" is confusing - do they have an option otherwise?

- a. The first year (12 months) is the initial mandate-at the end of the first year, an individual can request an additional 12 months, the court can require an additional 12 months OR the client will graduate from the program. Regardless of the length of time, BHS will continue to monitor all CARE clients for a year after they complete the Court Program.
- b. CARE Court is a Civil Court Process and participation is voluntary, the requirement is for County BHS to offer services that may benefit the participants.