



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

March 14, 2025

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-23 FY25 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Service, Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization Center and Mobile Crisis Team Pilot (\$2,906,323)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that *Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-23 FY25 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government (MCG), Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS), Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization Center (BHCSC) and Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) Pilot* has the potential to equitably advance health and safety outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) recipients of services made available through the program. Of note, information accompanying this supplemental request does not specify that this program is intended to mitigate disparities in access to mental health and substance use services and instead states that individuals of all racial and ethnic backgrounds across the lifespan stand to benefit.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of *SA #25-23 FY25 Operating Budget, MCG, DHHS, BHCSC and MCT Pilot* is to fund stabilization room services and Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams for one year. The funds are needed to support the development and implementation of a pilot program for the BHCSC and MCT as they undergo preparation to become licensed programs eligible for reimbursement through Maryland Medicaid and with State funding under the Public Behavioral Health System for furnished services. Specifically, the funds will be used for the purpose of securing medical equipment, medications, training, staff development and consultant services.

Racial Equity and Social Justice

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ORESJ has previously provided analysis on BHCSC and MCT in the form of feedback on DHHS's responses to Program-level questions in the Department's Operating Budget Equity Tool (OBET) submissions as well as racial equity impact assessments (REIAs) on supplemental appropriation requests for similar behavioral and mental health services. Our analysis and findings regarding this topic can be found in the following REIAs:

- REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #25-16 Department of Health and Human Services 988 Crisis Hotline Services
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/25-16.pdf>
- REIA of Special Appropriations #24-17 Department of Health and Human Services Behavioral Health and Crisis Service's Trauma Services
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/24-17.pdf>
- REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-16 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Behavior and Mental Health
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-16.pdf>

Similar to ORESJ's analysis of Program-level OBET submissions from the Department, the findings of BHCSC and MCT remain the same.

The response, as written, does not demonstrate how racial and structural inequities that create disparate access to, and experiences with, behavioral healthcare are incorporated into the program's design and analysis of program outcomes... While the program demonstrates the capacity to alter outreach approaches based on utilization data, it's unclear how BIPOC and low-income communities are experiencing the BHCS. While it is clear that BHCS provides an important service, it's not entirely clear whether it reduces gaps or disparities in behavioral healthcare access or outcomes.

ORESJ suggests utilizing program data to assess the effectiveness of these programs. Tracking outcomes by demographics such as race, ethnicity, age, and income can illustrate the primary beneficiaries of the programs and target resources to serve those most in need of the services they provide.

cc: Dr. James C. Bridgers, Jr., Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Tricia Swanson, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive