



The Office of Councilmember
Raul A. Campillo

Proudly serving San Diego's 7th District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Diego City Council Unanimously Declares Behavioral Health Bed Crisis

Councilmember Campillo leads charge to declare crisis; declaration directs city staff to research whether there are ways to lower barriers for the construction of real estate, as well as ensure proper interagency coordination with other levels of government

SAN DIEGO — Today, the San Diego City Council voted 8-0 to declare a Behavioral Health Bed Crisis in the City of San Diego.

“Hospital staff, bed providers, first responders, and social workers all agree: we must do more to increase behavioral health bed capacity in San Diego,” said Councilmember Raul Campillo. **“San Diegans can’t afford to wait any longer for serious progress on mental illness and addiction. Today’s declaration helps the City of San Diego work efficiently with partners at all levels of government to address this crisis.”**

“The deficit of available behavioral health beds creates a ripple effect across our entire medical system — impacting our most vulnerable constituents who need our support,” said Councilmember Kent Lee. **“We must work collaboratively with our county, healthcare, first responder, and non-profit partners across the region to do everything we can to meet those needs.”**

“As one of San Diego’s largest providers of substance use disorder treatment and residential detoxification services, McAlister Institute has been on the frontlines of the behavioral health bed shortage. This is a crisis,” said Marisa Varond, Executive Director of McAlister Institute. **“I commend Councilmembers Campillo, Lee, and the entire City Council for their leadership and responsiveness in addressing this crisis.”**

In addition to the resolution declaring a Behavioral Health Bed Crisis, today’s action directs City staff to explore updating zoning ordinances in the City of San Diego in order to ensure barriers to building and operating behavioral health facilities are minimal. Additionally, the action directs City staff to have regular communication with County, local, and regional partners to ensure strong coordination between all parties in order to address the lack of behavioral health beds.

As Chair of the Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations (ED&IR) Committee, Councilmember Campillo has advocated for progress on behavioral health for several months. In

September, he called a special meeting of the ED&IR Committee in order to hear from first responders, bed providers, and other stakeholders about the state of behavioral health in San Diego. Among other findings, staff presented that San Diego County needs to increase utilization of subacute services by 64%, community-based care by 142% (450 beds), and community crisis diversion by 359%. This uptick in behavioral health services would lead to a 40% drop in individuals using acute inpatient services.

At the subsequent Committee meeting, Committee members voted 4-0 to advance the resolution declaring a Behavioral Health Bed Crisis to the full City Council.

The resolution declaring a Behavioral Health Bed Crisis also comes in the context of wider behavioral health trends in California. Governor Gavin Newsom has been vocal in campaigning for voters to approve Proposition 1, which would build more than 11,150 behavioral health beds and 26,700 outpatient treatment slots, when it appears on the ballot for March 2024.

About Councilmember Raul Campillo

Councilmember Raul Campillo proudly represents the Seventh Council District of the City of San Diego and serves as the Chair of the Economic Development & Intergovernmental Relations Committee.

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