

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – SACRAMENTO, CA
FEBRUARY 5-6, 2024**

IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY

ISSUE: In Riverside County, access to health and mental health care is substandard and not meeting the needs of the region. This is due in large part because the county ranks 57th amongst California's 58 counties in state reimbursements for health care and emergency room services. This means local hospitals and physicians are being shortchanged millions of dollars annually, leading to low and decreasing access to health care and mental health resources.

Additionally, it is recommended to have one acute mental health bed per 2,000 residents. While California falls behind this number with one bed per 5,856 residents, Riverside County has a more pronounced shortage at one bed per 12,177 residents. This lack of inpatient psychiatric beds places a strain across the entire emergency response system in the region.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group urges leaders in the Legislature and Administration to look for opportunities to resolve these disparities. The current formula for reimbursing counties for health and mental health services must be updated to reflect Riverside County's significant population growth and Emergency Medical Services Act funds must be reinstated. The most plausible course of action is to leave base funding as-is and apply future increases to the counties that are underfunded until parity is reached.

BACKGROUND: The current distribution of health care resources provided by the state varies by county and does not account for our county's recent population growth. Riverside County is California's 4th most populous county but ranks near the bottom at 48th in health and mental health realignment allocations per capita (see grid below). The state formula has never been adjusted to recognize California's changing demographics or massive population shifts and does not allow for adjustments in population. Riverside County had a population of 1,170,413 in 1990 and currently has a population of 2,418,185 residents. Riverside County has doubled in size, but the reimbursement formula used by the state has not changed to reflect the same growth.

Riverside County has three times the indigent population of San Francisco County but receives one fifth of the funding per capita. Riverside County physicians who participate in the state's emergency medical services reimbursement program provided \$40 million in emergency medical care to indigent patients but were reimbursed just \$2.6 million. Riverside County health care providers deserve their fair share of reimbursements.

Riverside County, like most counties in the state, has seen a significant reduction in psychiatric inpatient beds. The County currently has 77 inpatient beds per 2.4 million residents. This systemwide capacity reduction, combined with population growth and an increase in mental health emergencies, is overwhelming health care facilities in the region.

The facility that currently houses RUHS's Emergency Treatment Services/Inpatient Treatment Facility was constructed in 1980 and needs renovations to meet codes and guidelines in order to serve as a comforting and safe environment for patients. While some renovations have been made, the regulatory gaps as well as structural and security issues that still exist impede the ability to provide appropriate care and do not align with current care delivery expectations.

State investments will allow Riverside County and RUHS to develop a facility that reduces the burden of untreated behavioral health conditions in our communities and meets the increasing demands of care by integrating mental health, substance use, and physical health services. By replacing and consolidating the current outdated facility with a modern, centrally located center on the existing RUHS-MC Moreno Valley Campus, the County of Riverside will create a comprehensive structure that increases capacity as a safety-net hospital that meets the needs of the region.

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State Health and Mental Health Realignment Allocations by County							
County	Health and Mental Health Realignment Total Allocation	Total Population	Allocations Per Capita and Rank		Poverty Population	Allocation per Poverty Capita and Rank	
San Francisco	\$134,416,766.74	825,863	\$162.76	1	104,784	\$1,282.80	2
Humboldt	\$16,909,037.56	134,827	\$125.41	2	25,729	\$657.20	8
Marin	\$24,126,071.98	256,069	\$94.22	7	18,371	\$1,313.27	1
Napa	\$11,182,566.86	139,045	\$80.42	14	13,341	\$838.21	3
Los Angeles	\$717,433,275.30	9,962,789	\$72.01	17	1,658,231	\$432.65	25
Fresno	\$63,149,009.95	947,895	\$66.62	20	226,967	\$278.23	43
Alameda	\$100,374,372.92	1,554,720	\$64.56	21	178,897	\$561.07	13
Kern	\$42,987,059.50	856,158	\$50.21	37	180,779	\$237.79	48
San Diego	\$159,817,796.08	3,177,063	\$50.30	36	418,555	\$381.83	31
San Bernardino	\$96,367,030.06	2,081,313	\$46.30	44	350,982	\$274.56	44
Orange	\$134,765,562.89	3,090,132	\$43.61	45	349,220	\$385.90	30
Riverside	\$78,579,957.34	2,268,783	\$34.64	48	335,557	\$234.18	49
California	\$2,295,654,351.28	38,041,430	\$60.35		5,590,100	\$410.66	

Source: CA State Controller's Office FY 2011-2012; U.S. Census ACS 2008-2012; U.S. Census, Annual Estimates of Resident Population, April 2010 to July 2012.

**All counties with a total population of 25,000 or less were not included.