



Media Contact:  
Chelsea Kottke  
ckottke@cornerstonecomms.com  
(949) 244-4890

## **Be Well OC Partners With City of Laguna Beach to Bring Mobile Mental Health Services to Community**

*Team of Crisis Intervention Specialists will Support Local Law Enforcement and First Responders with Community Mental Health and Wellness*

**Orange, CA. May 16, 2023** – Be Well OC is pleased to announce a partnership approved by the City of Laguna Beach to establish a Mobile Response Team providing community mental health and wellness in the City. The program was approved for a two-year pilot and is set to launch on August 1, 2023.

Funding for the program includes a combination of public and private funding. Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris secured \$1.5 million in state funding to support the program, and the City of Laguna Beach also received \$405,111 in CARES Act funds from the County to cover the City's contribution. The program is also supported by a \$200,000 gift from the Ueberroth Family Foundation, which covers the capital investment of the mobile van and initial community outreach efforts.

"Access to mental health services is a pressing need here in Orange County," said Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris. "I am proud to have secured \$1.5 million in state budget funding to ensure that Laguna Beach has a Be Well OC Mobile Crisis Response Team available to respond and provide urgent and timely services to those who need it most."

"For too long mental health services have been ignored in communities throughout California. The Be Well OC program will fill that gap here in Laguna Beach and help us to provide services to residents and unhoused individuals. It will also allow us to better utilize our law enforcement and fire department personnel," said Laguna Beach Mayor Bob Whalen. "We are grateful to Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris for securing state funding for this two-year pilot program and to the County of Orange to contributing additional funding. We look forward to welcoming Be Well OC's well-known blue vans to Laguna Beach and to helping address mental health in our community."

Laguna Beach will be the sixth city in Orange County to adopt a Be Well Mobile Response model, joining Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Garden Grove, Anaheim and Irvine. The program incorporates Be Well staff into a city's network of first responders and enables 911 dispatchers to route mental health and substance use crisis calls to the Be Well Mobile Crisis Response Team. Skilled in de-escalation, crisis intervention, counseling and mediation, the Be Well Mobile Crisis Response Team effectively addresses the client's emotional and social well-being. If needed and wanted by the client, the team can transport them for additional care.

"We could not be more grateful to Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris, the City of Laguna Beach, and Ueberroth Family Foundation for their visionary leadership in supporting the expansion of Be Well's Mobile Response program and strengthening mental health support



services in Laguna Beach,” said Marshall Moncrief, CEO of Be Well OC. “The Mobile Response Team in Laguna Beach will provide critical support not only to residents in need of mental health and wellness care, but also to first responders and law enforcement who can better prioritize areas of highest need for police response and community safety.”

Data from the five existing pilot programs across Orange County demonstrate the value of incorporating Be Well’s Mobile Response into the City’s first response network, including:

- 83% of calls did not require transport for additional care
- 60% of calls did not require a co-response from law enforcement
- Average response time: 14 minutes
- Average time on scene: 1.5 hours
- Law enforcement partners report that the Be Well Mobile Crisis Response Team saves 8-10 hours a day of productive police time (on average)

“We have seen that amazing things can happen when public and private partnerships come together, so we were compelled to join Be Well OC and the City of Laguna Beach in launching this mobile response program,” said Vicki Booth, President of the Peter & Ginny Ueberroth Family Foundation. “The Ueberroth Family Foundation believes strongly in the work being done by Be Well OC to create a systematic approach to solving the pervasive issue of mental health, something that everyone is affected by in some way. We have directly seen the impact the mobile response program has had in other cities, and we know this investment will pay in dividends on the impact it brings to Laguna Beach.”

Established in 1984, the Peter and Ginny Ueberroth Family Foundation has been giving back to the community for three decades. The foundation is committed to assisting community-based organizations that are effectively making a difference, believing that by assisting people to take greater responsibility for their own well-being and for the communities in which they live, a better future can be created. The foundation supports local organizations, with a focus on youth programs, education, health and human services. The foundation believes in personal involvement with the organizations it supports, therefore the majority of the funding takes place in Orange County or within the communities where directors live.

#### **ABOUT BE WELL OC**

Be Well OC is a transformative initiative bringing together public, private, academic and faith-based organizations, as well as others, to create a coordinated system of mental health care and support for all Orange County residents. The Be Well OC mental health system, which also includes substance use services, features a world-class mental health and wellness facility in Orange and a robust mobile response program currently serving XX cities. Be Well OC’s movement spans across all cities of Orange County and a range of needs, from prevention and early intervention to crisis aversion, acute care and recovery. For more information visit [bewelloc.org](http://bewelloc.org).

###