

Dear Laguna Beach Community,

Next week we are introducing a game-changing program for our community called Be Well OC which will provide mobile mental health services in the City of Laguna Beach. The program was approved by the City Council in April for a two-year pilot and is set to officially launch on August 1, 2023.

The program incorporates Be Well staff into our 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 aims to effectively address the client's emotional and social well-being. If needed and wanted by the client, the team can transport them to a health facility for additional care.

Mental health is an issue of utmost importance, and we, as a community, must ensure that support and resources are readily available to those in need. With the launch of the Be Well OC mobile mental health services, we are taking a significant step forward in addressing this critical area of well-being in the City of Laguna Beach.

Funding for the program includes a combination of public and private funding. A huge thank you goes to Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris who secured \$1.5 million in state funding to support the program. The City also received \$405,111 in CARES Act funds from the County and a \$200,000 gift from the Ueberroth Family Foundation, which covers the capital investment of the mobile van and initial community outreach efforts. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow City Councilmembers, Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris, the dedicated team at Be Well OC, our City Manager and City staff, and the Ueberroth Family Foundation for supporting this new initiative.

Please join us in kicking off our Be Well OC services at the Main Beach Cobblestones on Tuesday, August 1, where we will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 5:00 p.m. to mark the official start of the program. The event will kick off a new era of accessible mental health services, allowing our community to receive the support they deserve, when and where they need it most.

The Be Well OC ribbon cutting also coincides with the start of National Night Out on Tuesday, August 1 - a nationwide initiative aimed at bringing communities together to promote neighborhood safety, unity, and partnerships with local law enforcement.

National Night Out is a fantastic opportunity for us to engage with our friends, neighbors, and public safety personnel in a fun and welcoming atmosphere. Our Laguna Beach Police Department, Fire Department, and Marine Safety Department will offer live demonstrations, games, food trucks, Kona ice, music, face painting, and even a chance to meet the famous Laguna Beach goats! Our public safety officers look forward to meeting the community, answering your questions, and fostering a stronger bond between the community and our public safety departments. National Night Out runs from 5 – 8 p.m. at Main Beach on Tuesday, August 1 – don't miss this opportunity to learn about what our first responders do and meet our team!

I hope you and your family and friends are enjoying our beautiful Laguna Beach summer.

In Community Spirit, Mayor Bob Whalen