



Supervisor Hillary Ronen

In 2019, I along with Supervisor Haney authored Mental Health SF, a law that established a clear roadmap to create a coordinated system of care for people suffering from mental illness and addiction. The ordinance was unanimously approved by the Board and the Mayor.

Last year, the Board approved a budget to allow DPH to begin implementing Mental Health SF. DPH has prioritized the rollout of the Street Crisis Response Teams to provide support to unhoused individuals experiencing mental distress or psychiatrist crisis on our streets as an alternative to police response. DPH is also in the early stages of implementing two other key components of Mental Health SF: expanding the number of treatment beds in the system and building the Office of Coordinated Care which includes hiring a large pool of intensive case managers to provide one-on-one support in connecting clients to treatment, shelter, and other wraparound services.

In anticipation to releasing her annual budget, the Mayor has proposed a new Street Overdose Response Teams for unhoused individuals who have survived an overdose, as well as the Street Wellness Response Teams to support homeless individuals who are not in crisis but need attention and support. Additionally, community advocates have been pushing for the introduction of Compassionate Alternate Response Teams (CART), another response team to respond to calls about the social and behavioral health needs of unhoused residents in public spaces.

It is unclear how these different street response teams relate to one another or how these services will be coordinated to avoid redundancies and allow for the most efficient delivery of services to our most vulnerable residents. The continued rollout of piecemeal, uncoordinated program risks undermining the overarching goals of Mental Health SF, which are to develop a coordinated system of care within which people in crisis can reliably get the help that they need, when they need it, without long waits and barriers blocking access to that care.

I am calling a hearing to determine how the Mayor's two new street crisis teams will coordinate with the existing Street Crisis Response Teams in order to address the crises of homelessness, addiction, overdoses, and mental illness plaguing people in the streets of San Francisco. The hearing will review how the creation of these new units relates to the city's ongoing priority of implementing Mental Health SF. The hearing will also consider how the community led campaign to implement CART relates to the street teams that are currently operating or are being proposed.

I am directing the Clerk of the Board to invite representatives from the Department of Public Health, the Fire Department, the Mental Health SF Implementation Workgroup, and proponents of the community-led CART initiative.