



For General Public/ Family Members:

1. What is CARE Court?

- a. The Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court is a new state law meant to address and treat those with severe mental health disorders by allowing the court to order behavioral health treatment in community-based settings.
- b. Eligible residents are those with severe mental health disorders, such as schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, who are substantially deteriorating and unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision.
- c. Voluntary treatment is always preferred, with or without a CARE Court Plan. Voluntary engagement is encouraged throughout the CARE Court process.
- d. The program prioritizes self-autonomy and civil liberties, providing free legal representation to individuals subject to a petition. Forced medication is not part of this program, nor does the program penalize individuals, either in a civil or criminal manner for non-compliance.

2. Who qualifies for CARE Court?

The plan is focused on individuals, 18 years of age or older, with severe mental health disorders, such as schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders who are substantially deteriorating and unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision. In addition, CARE Court is designed to help divert individuals from entering into more restrictive conservatorships or incarceration.

3. How does it work?

A court petition is required to start the process of assessing the individual's eligibility for CARE Court. A judge will initially determine whether the person for whom treatment is sought is eligible.

When a participant is accepted into CARE Court, the individual is assigned a representative who will work with Behavioral Health Services to develop a plan or agreement tailored to the participant's needs. The CARE Plan includes community-based resources, including peer support, counseling, stabilization medications and housing.

The individual is then ordered by a judge to follow the CARE Plan and be provided the resources outlined in the CARE Plan. The individual will receive services under their plan for approximately one year. Review hearings will be scheduled periodically to assess the progress and ensure accountability.

4. How can I refer my loved one to CARE Court?

- a. Riverside County residents who need more information about CARE Court and who qualifies can dial (800) 499-3008 or [visit our website at:](#)
- b. Anyone, including family, county and community-based social service providers can call for more information about CARE court.

5. What if my loved one doesn't qualify for CARE Court?

Not everyone will qualify for CARE Court, but everyone is encouraged to seek help themselves or for a loved one by calling the Riverside University Health System - Behavioral Health's **CARES Line at 800-499-3008**.

6. Are there any costs to the individuals enrolled in CARE Court?

There is no cost to the individual participating.

7. What is the court process?

A petition for an individual who potentially meets criteria for CARE Court must be filed with the Superior Court. If a judge determines the individual for whom treatment is sought appears to meet criteria, Riverside University Health Systems–Behavioral Health will be notified, and an attorney will be appointed to represent the individual. Together, all parties will work to develop a CARE Plan to meet the individual's outpatient treatment needs. A CARE Plan is specifically tailored and can include clinically prescribed treatment with supportive services, medications, and a housing plan. If a CARE Plan is ordered, it will last for 12 months with periodic court reviews. A CARE Plan can be renewed one time for an additional 12-month period if necessary. Following the expiration of the CARE Court process, an individual who is willing to engage can continue to participate with available treatment plans.

8. Will my loved one be able to make their own decisions?

One of the fundamental principles of CARE Court is to empower individuals to make self-directed decisions about their own treatment and recovery. Participants work collaboratively with a CARE Supporter and legal representation to create a personalized CARE Plan that fits their unique needs and circumstances. The emphasis is on supporting individuals in making informed decisions and building a recovery-oriented life. It's important to note, however, that while the program promotes self-determination, it also operates within a framework of court-ordered support to ensure the health and safety of the participants.

9. Is this a conservatorship?

CARE Court is not a conservatorship and is less restrictive than a conservatorship.

10. What if my loved one doesn't complete or drops out of CARE court?

If your loved one does not complete the CARE Court program, they would return to the traditional mental health care system and no longer receive the specialized support of CARE Court. However, each situation is unique, and the exact implications can vary based on the individual's circumstances and the reasons for discontinuation. Importantly, it's crucial to encourage the person to continue engaging with available mental health resources and consider discussing with a mental health professional about the best alternative care options for them. You can always reach out to the Riverside University Health System **CARES Line at (800) 499-3008** for guidance and support during such transitions.

11. Is there a penalty if my loved one drops out of CARE Court?

If a participant decides to leave CARE Court, there's no penalty. Instead, they would return to standard mental health care, or maybe referred by the court for a conservatorship. Individual circumstances will determine next steps.

12. Can CARE Court make my loved one take and stay on their medication?

Stabilization medications may be provided to manage symptoms and promote recovery as part of the Care Plan. In certain circumstances, stabilization medication may also be ordered by the court. However, it's important to note that forced medication is not part of this program.

13. How soon can my loved one get into housing?

Housing security is an important element of the CARE Court program. Housing is based on the individual's specific needs, the availability of suitable housing options, and other relevant factors. It's important to remember that every participant's journey is unique, and our goal is to provide the best possible support for each individual.

14. Will my loved one receive legal representation? Is this a criminal legal matter?

While CARE Court is not a criminal process, there is a requirement that counsel be appointed to all individuals. This ensures that your loved one's legal rights are understood and protected throughout the process.

15. How can I get more information? What phone number can I call?

For more information on the CARE Court program, call the Riverside University Health System CARES Line at (800) 499-3008 or visit ----.

For First Responders:

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- c. Voluntary treatment is always preferred, with or without a CARE Court Plan. Voluntary engagement is encouraged throughout the CARE Court process.
- d. The program prioritizes self-autonomy and civil liberties, providing free legal representation to individuals subject to a petition. Forced medication is not part of this program, nor does the program penalize individuals, either in a civil or criminal manner for non-compliance.

2. Who qualifies for CARE Court?

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3. How does it work?

A court petition is required to start the process of assessing the individual's eligibility for CARE Court. A judge will initially determine whether the person for whom treatment is sought is eligible.

When a participant is accepted into CARE Court, the individual is assigned a representative who will work with Behavioral Health Services to develop a plan or agreement tailored to the participant's needs. The CARE Plan includes community-based resources, including peer support, counseling, stabilization medications and housing.

The individual is then ordered by a judge to follow the CARE Plan and be provided the resources outlined in the CARE Plan. The individual will receive services under their

plan for approximately one year. Review hearings will be scheduled periodically to assess the progress and ensure accountability.

4. What's my role in CARE Court as a first responder?

As a first responder, you often come into **repeated contact** with residents with severe mental health disorders, such as schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders who are substantially deteriorating and unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision. You may also often encounter their loved ones seeking help. Repeated contact may mean multiple arrests, multiple detentions, or multiple transportations with the same individual experiencing psychiatric emergencies. You may refer individual residents who might qualify for the program to the CARES hotline or to inform loved ones where to go for more information on the program.

5. How can a first responder refer someone to CARE Court?

By calling the Riverside University Health System - Behavioral Health's **CARES Line at 800-499-3008**

6. How can I get more information? Is there a phone number I can call?

Riverside University Health System - Behavioral Health's **CARES Line at 800-499-3008** or visit -----.

7. Someone needs imminent crisis intervention, who should we call?

For urgent, immediate mental health interventions, first responders should call the RUHS-Behavioral Health mobile crisis response team or the CBAT.

For Housing and Homeless Service Providers, and Community Based Organizations:

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plan for approximately one year. Review hearings will be scheduled periodically to assess the progress and ensure accountability.

4. What's my role in CARE Court as a housing, homeless service provider or community-based organization?

Your role as a service provider or community-based organization will primarily be to continue your partnership with the County in delivering services and programming for the unhoused population including potential CARE Court participants. At times, you may also refer individuals to CARE Court. As we will roll out the CARE Court program we will provide training to providers on the referral process.

5. How can a housing/homeless services provider or CBO refer someone to CARE Court?
By calling the Riverside University Health System - Behavioral Health's CARES Line at **800-499-3008**

6. How soon can someone in CARE Court get into housing?

Housing security is an important element of the CARE Court program. Housing is based on the individual's specific needs, the availability of suitable housing options, and other relevant factors. It's important to remember that every participant's journey is unique, and our goal is to provide the best possible support for each individual.

7. What happens if housing is needed, but not available?

Housing supply is an issue in Riverside County, but every attempt will be made through the CARE Plan to obtain permanent or transitional housing options.

8. How long will housing be available?

Housing will be available while the participant is enrolled in CARE Court with the intention to permanently house the participants with proper supports after completion of CARE Court.

9. What support services come with the housing?

Support services will depend upon the needs of the participant. Generally, they include behavioral health treatment, education and training on maintaining housing, financial literacy, transportation for medical appointments, and other support needs identified in the CARE Plan.

10. If someone walks away from CARE Court, does their housing become unavailable?

The county will continue to engage the individual to provide some level of housing support. All housing options are dependent upon individual needs and availability.

11. If someone isn't following rules for housing and asked to leave, can they still complete CARE Court?

Yes. Participation in CARE Court is not based solely on housing.

12. How can I get more information? Is there a phone number I can call?

Riverside University Health System - Behavioral Health's CARES Line at 800-499-3008 or visit -----.