

**SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**  
**Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair**  
**2023-2024 Regular Session**

AB 1948 (Rendon)  
Version: March 12, 2024  
Hearing Date: June 11, 2024  
Fiscal: No  
Urgency: No  
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**SUBJECT**

Homeless multidisciplinary personnel teams

**DIGEST**

This bill removes the sunset date on the pilot program in several, specified counties that allows homeless adult and family multidisciplinary personnel teams (MDTs) to serve individuals at risk of homelessness, including through confidential data sharing, and extends the authority to San Mateo County.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In order to gain the benefits of homeless adult and family MDTs in the fight to prevent homelessness, a five-year pilot program was created to allow these MDTs to serve this population, applying the same privacy protections in place and a requirement that the personnel be additionally trained in homelessness prevention. The program operates in the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Clara, and Ventura until January 1, 2025.

This bill extends the program to include San Mateo County and removes the sunset date. The bill is sponsored by Los Angeles County. It is supported by a number of local governmental entities and the Steinberg Institute. The Committee has received no timely opposition. This bill passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee on a vote of 4 to 0.

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW**

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that a county may establish a homeless adult and family MDT to facilitate expedited identification, assessment, and linkage of homeless individuals to housing and supportive services within that county and to allow

provider agencies and members of the personnel team to share confidential information for the purpose of coordinating housing and supportive services to ensure continuity of care. (Welf. & Inst. Code § 18999.8(a).)<sup>1</sup>

- 2) Defines an MDT as any team of two or more persons who are trained in the identification and treatment of homeless adults and families, and who are qualified to provide a broad range of services related to homelessness. Provides that an MDT may include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
  - a) mental health and substance abuse services personnel and practitioners or other trained counseling personnel;
  - b) police officers, probation officers, or other law enforcement agents.
  - c) legal counsel for the adult or family representing them in a criminal matter;
  - d) medical personnel with sufficient training to provide health services;
  - e) social services workers with experience or training in the provision of services to homeless adults or families or funding and eligibility for services;
  - f) case managers or case coordinators responsible for referral, linkage, or coordination of care and services provided to adults or families;
  - g) veterans services providers and counselors;
  - h) domestic violence victim service organizations, as defined;
  - i) any public or private school teacher, administrative officer, or certified pupil personnel employee; and
  - j) housing or homeless services provider agencies and designated personnel. (*Id.* at (b).)
  
- 3) Authorizes MDT members engaged in the identification, assessment, and linkage of housing and supportive services to homeless adults or families to disclose to, and exchange with, one another information and writings that relate to any information that may be designated as confidential under state law if the member believes it is generally relevant to the identification, reduction, or elimination of homelessness or the provision of services. Designates any discussion relating to this information as confidential and inadmissible in court proceedings. (*Id.* at (c).)
  
- 4) Requires that the sharing of confidential information under these provisions be governed by protocols developed in each county describing how and what information may be shared by the homeless adult and family multidisciplinary personnel team to ensure that confidential information gathered by the team is not disclosed in violation of state or federal law. Establishes requirements for the development and content of the protocols, including requirements governing training and retention, protection, and destruction of the information. (*Id.* at (e).)

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<sup>1</sup> All further statutory references are to the Welfare and Institutions Code unless otherwise specified.

- 5) Provides that every member of the MDT who receives information or records regarding adults and families in their capacity as a member of the team is subject to the same privacy and confidentiality obligations and the same confidentiality penalties as the person disclosing or providing the information or records. Requires that the information or records obtained be maintained in a manner that ensures the maximum protection of privacy and confidentiality rights. (*Id.* at (f).)
- 6) Deems information and records communicated or provided to the MDT members by all providers and agencies as private and confidential and provides that the information and records are protected from discovery and disclosure by all applicable statutory and common law protections. Provides that existing civil and criminal penalties apply to the inappropriate disclosure of information held by the team members. (*Id.* at (h).)
- 7) Creates a five-year pilot program, until January 1, 2025 that will allow the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Clara, and Ventura to expand the goal for their homeless adult and family MDTs to additionally include facilitating the expedited identification, assessment, and linkage of individuals at risk of homelessness to housing and supportive services within that county, and the goal of facilitating the expedited prevention of homelessness for those individuals. (§ 18999.81 (a).)
- 8) Defines “individuals at risk of homelessness” to mean an individual who is indigent or receiving or eligible to receive public benefits in the form of cash aid, and who meets both of the following conditions:
  - a) The individual experiences either of the following: is exiting, or exited within the most recent 12 months, a state-funded or locally funded detention or treatment setting, including, but not limited to, a jail, prison, health facility, mental health facility, or substance use disorder treatment program; or is aging out, or aged out within the most recent 12 months, of the child welfare system or juvenile justice system; and
  - b) The individual presents with, or received services within the most recent 12 months for significant health, mental health, or substance use issues. (*Id.* at (b).)
- 9) Requires the homeless adult and family MDTs for individuals at risk of homelessness to also include persons who are trained in the prevention of homelessness. (*Id.* at (c).)
- 10) Permits members of a homeless adult and family MDT engaged in the prevention of homelessness or linkage of housing and supportive services for individuals at risk of homelessness, to disclose to, and exchange with, one another, information and writings that relate to any information that may be

designated as confidential under state law if the member of the team reasonably believes it is generally relevant to the identification of individuals at risk of homelessness or the prevention of homelessness or the provision of services. (*Id.* at (d).)

- 11) Requires the MPT member who first establishes contact with an individual at risk of homelessness to notify the individual that the individual's confidential information may be shared for the purpose of coordinating housing and supportive services to ensure the continuity of care and to attempt to obtain the individual's consent for that information sharing. (*Ibid.*)
- 12) Permits members of a homeless adult and family MPT to share with other MPT members confidential information about an individual at risk of homelessness for either of the following purposes:
  - a) Identifying individuals at risk of homelessness, unless and until the individual affirmatively opts out of having their information shared; and/or
  - b) Coordinating housing and supportive services to ensure continuity of care for a period not to exceed 30 days from the time a team member first establishes contact with the individual, or unless and until the individual affirmatively opts out of having their information shared, whichever occurs first. (*Ibid.*)
- 13) Provides that the confidentiality and privacy provisions governing adult and family MPTs that serve homeless individuals shall also apply to information or writings disclosed, exchanged, or acquired by adult and family MPTs that serve individuals at risk of homelessness, and that information and writings shall not be disclosed in violation of existing federal or state privacy laws. (*Id.* at (e).)

This bill:

- 1) Removes the sunset date for the pilot program.
- 2) Extends the authority for MPTs serving individuals at risk of homelessness to San Mateo County.

### COMMENTS

#### 1. Utilizing MPTs to combat homelessness

To facilitate identification and assessment of homeless individuals and connect them with housing and supportive services, AB 210 (Santiago, Ch. 544, Stats. 2017) authorized counties to establish MPTs. Under AB 210, members of MPTs may share confidential

information with other MPT members to ensure continuity of care, subject to protocols developed by the county.

AB 728 (Santiago, Ch. 337, Stats. 2019), sponsored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, established a pilot program in the Counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Clara, and Ventura, that expanded those provisions to apply to individuals at risk of being homeless. AB 728 allows for individuals to opt out of such sharing. The statute sunsets in 2025.

2. Extending the AB 728 pilot programs indefinitely

This bill extends the AB 728 authority for MPTs serving individuals at risk of homelessness to San Mateo County and removes the sunset entirely.

According to the author:

AB 728 (Santiago of 2019) provided an effective and now proven method to address the growing homelessness crisis in our state. We must use every tool we can to continue this work, including preventing homelessness in the first place. The ability to target and deliver the homelessness prevention solutions mentioned in AB 728 expires on January 1, 2025. Multidisciplinary Personnel Teams in the specified counties will no longer be able to utilize this particular authority to coordinate housing and resources for individuals at risk of homelessness. This would eliminate an important means of identifying people who are eligible for and likely to benefit from these services. AB 1948 will indefinitely extend the availability of critical intervention and assistance, allowing these counties to endeavor to stop homelessness before it can occur.

Writing in support, the Steinberg Institute argues:

The ability of MDTs to coordinate resources and housing is a crucial preventive measure against homelessness. Without AB 1948, the authority enabling this coordinated effort would lapse, eliminating a proven method of assisting those on the precipice to become unhoused. By indefinitely extending the remit of MDTs, AB 1948 will sustain the momentum of these interventions and assist counties in continuing to provide this vital service. The Steinberg Institute believes that preventing homelessness before it occurs is not just compassionate policy but also fiscally responsible governance.

**SUPPORT**

Los Angeles County (sponsor)  
California State Association of Counties  
City of Long Beach  
John Burton Advocates for Youth  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department  
Orange County  
San Bernardino County  
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
Steinberg Institute

**OPPOSITION**

None received

**RELATED LEGISLATION**

Pending Legislation: AB 1788 (Quirk-Silva, 2024) authorizes counties to establish mental health MDTs, as defined, with the goal of facilitating the expedited identification, assessment, and linkage of justice-involved persons diagnosed with a mental illness to supportive services within that county while incarcerated and upon release from county jail and to allow provider agencies and members of the personnel team to share confidential information, as specified, for the purpose of coordinating supportive services to ensure continuity of care. AB 1788 is currently in this Committee.

Prior Legislation:

AB 728 (Santiago, Ch. 337, Stats. 2019) *See Comment 1.*

AB 210 (Santiago, Ch. 544, Stats. 2017) *See Comment 1.*

**PRIOR VOTES:**

Senate Human Services Committee (Ayes 4, Noes 0)  
Assembly Floor (Ayes 75, Noes 0)  
Assembly Human Services Committee (Ayes 7, Noes 0)

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