



Health & Human Services Agency

COUNTY OF TULARE AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

LARRY MICARI
District One

PETE VANDER POEL
District Two

AMY SHUKLIAN
District Three

EDDIE VALERO
District Four

DENNIS TOWNSEND
District Five

AGENDA DATE: July 9, 2024

Public Hearing Required	N/A
Scheduled Public Hearing w/Clerk	N/A
Published Notice Required	N/A
Advertised Published Notice	N/A
Meet & Confer Required	N/A
Budget Transfer (Aud 308) attached	N/A
Personnel Resolution attached	N/A
Agreement(s) attached	Yes

CONTACT PERSON: Staci Chastain PHONE: 559-624-8000

SUBJECT: Approve an agreement with Fonemed, LLC

REQUEST(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve an agreement with Fonemed, LLC to provide nurse triage call-in services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for patients, in an amount not to exceed \$27,030, retroactive from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. This agreement is retroactive due to delays in receiving the agreement from Fonemed, LLC; making it impracticable for the Board to take action prior to July 1, 2022.
2. Find that the Board had the authority to enter into the agreement as of July 1, 2022 and that it was in the County's best interest to enter into the agreement on that date.
3. Authorize the Chair of the Board to sign the agreement.

SUMMARY:

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved Agreement No. 29464 on November 5, 2019, for after-hours nurse triage and health advice. Fonemed, LLC (Fonemed) allows patients to speak directly to a nurse, which may support the patient from making unnecessary emergency room visits resulting in reduced healthcare costs. The Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) Public Health Branch is requesting to approve an agreement with Fonemed to provide nurse triage services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for Tulare County Health Care Centers. Fonemed has been instrumental in enhancing patient access to care and complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

The Tulare County Health Care Centers are required to provide after-hours coverage to

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address urgent medical conditions on a twenty-four hour basis to be compliant with their Federally Qualified Health Center Look-A-Like and Patient-Centered Medical Home designations. Fonemed is staffed with highly skilled medical professionals with various medical practice experiences; these skills are essential to delivering quality services. This agreement will replace the current services from after-hours triage to availability for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, on an as-needed basis which will not displace HHSA staff. This service is available to over 6,000 Health Care Center patients served annually.

This agreement did not include a Request for Proposal, as Fonemed has been providing services for Tulare County Health Care Centers since 2015.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

The budgeted costs associated with this agreement is in an amount not to exceed \$27,030 for the three (3) year term and will be included in the Visalia Health Care Center Unit 3014 budget, object line 7043 Professional and Specialized Services. \$9,010 was included in the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 budget, and \$9,010 was included in Fiscal Year 2023/2024. \$9,010 will be included in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 proposed budget. Program revenues from medical reimbursements will cover expenses. There is no net County cost to the General Fund.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF TULARE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:

The County's five-year strategic plan includes better Organizational Performance and Quality of Life. This agreement helps fulfill this obligation as the project will improve patient access to care and allow medical staff to work more cohesively to improve organizational performance. Providing this nurse triage service will allow patients to receive expanded access to care and decrease the number of unnecessary emergency room visits, which can ultimately improve patient's access to care, their quality of life and reduce overall healthcare costs.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:

/s/Karen Elliott

Karen Elliott

Director of Public Health

Cc: County Administrative Office

Attachments: Agreement