



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF BUTTE

* * * NEWS RELEASE * * *

MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BUTTE COUNTY TO LAUNCH CARE ACT PROGRAM

The Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act takes effect in Butte County on December 1, 2024. The CARE Act was created through Senate Bill 1338 in 2022, adding Welfare & Institutions Code sections 5970–5987. It creates a new court pathway to deliver mental health and substance use disorder services to individuals who have certain untreated mental illnesses, specifically, schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders. By focusing on a holistic person-centered approach, it aims to break the cycle of homelessness and incarceration for these individuals, avoid other restrictive methods of treatment, and promote long-term recovery.

Starting December 1, 2024, petitioners will be able to request voluntary treatment services, mental health support, and a housing plan for eligible individuals. Individuals can be referred to CARE Court by a family member, first responder, or service provider. The process can be initiated by calling Butte County Behavioral Health at (530) 891-2810 or 1-800-334-6622. Alternatively, individuals can file CARE Act petitions in the Civil Division at the North Butte County Courthouse in Chico. Petitions may also be electronically filed free of charge via any authorized eFiling service provider (EFSP) as listed on the court's website: <https://www.butte.courts.ca.gov/online-services/efiling-information>. Butte County Superior Court's Self-Help Center will have services available to assist CARE Act petitioners, respondents, and families as they navigate the process.

Court proceedings will be heard by Judge Stephen E. Benson at the North Butte County Courthouse, with remote appearances available. These court proceedings are confidential and not open to the public. If the respondent meets the eligibility requirements, Butte County Behavioral Health may create a CARE agreement or plan, and if approved, ordered by the court.

For more information about the CARE Act, please call or visit any of the following:

- Butte County Superior Court:
 - Self-Help Center - (530) 532-7015; Civil Division - (530) 532-7009
 - Webpage for forms, frequently asked questions, and other resources: <https://www.butte.courts.ca.gov/general-information/Care-Act>
- Butte County Behavioral Health:
 - 24/7 Access Line - (530) 891-2810 or 1-800-334-6622
 - Webpage for resources: <https://www.buttecounty.net/159/Behavioral-Health>