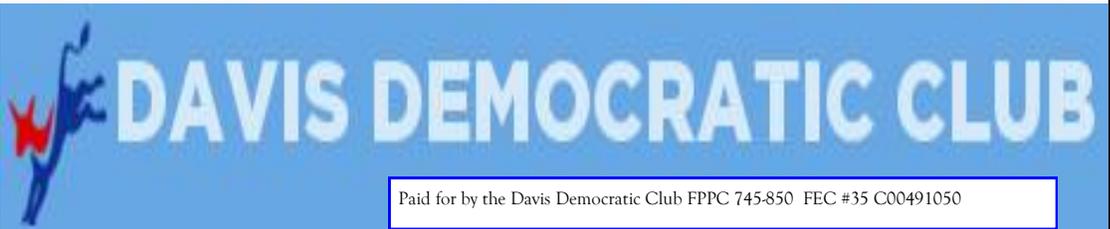


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## Yolo County Focuses on Mental Health

By Gary Sandy, Yolo County Supervisor



This year the County of Yolo will embark on implementing a series of mental health programs with the potential to make local residents healthier, safer, and more secure. Nearly one in six residents of California experiences some form of mental illness. One out of 24 experiences a mental illness that is so debilitating it is difficult for them to hold a job or experience a positive family life. Add to that the shadow of a pervasive pandemic, and life becomes more challenging.

### Crisis Now

Partially through the use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding, the County is partnering with the cities and school districts to address mental health issues head on. Implementation of the aptly named “Crisis Now” program will focus on three key components, including:

- Advanced crisis call centers to coordinate all levels of crisis to find a solution
- Use of 24/7 mobile crisis teams dispatched by call centers to engage with people in the community who are experiencing a crisis. This will both lessen the burden on local police and also reduce the stigma some feel when a uniformed officer knocks on the door
- Facilities that are open 24 hours, 7 days a week will serve as crisis-stabilization locations to provide short term care for people who need support and observation regardless of their level of crisis

The Crisis Now model is endorsed by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) and was developed in conjunction with the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the National Council for Behavioral Health, and RI International. Crisis Now’s national program also provides weekly technical assistance alongside ongoing training and support after implementation. Crisis Now’s comprehensive emergency care reduces and prevents suicides while providing more immediate and targeted help for the person in distress. In addition, it cuts cost of care substantially by reducing the need for psychiatric hospital bed usage, emergency department visits, and law enforcement overuse.

The anticipated expenditures of Yolo County’s Crisis Now pilot program include the crisis call center, mobile crisis support, the crisis receiving center, and short-term beds for clients in transition. The average annual operational cost of the program will be \$11,833,847. The County has leveraged 17 funding streams to cover startup and ongoing program costs, including \$3 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds. The cities have committed to matching the \$3 million in ARP monies, and the private health systems have also agreed to share in the funding. Additional funding streams include California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM), funding from a lawsuit settlement from opioid manufacturers, a Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) grant, private insurers, and federal incentives. In addition to ARP funds, the County will also be contributing a Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG), along with approved funding from Medi-Cal, MHSA, and AB109.

### School-based Mental Health

The Crisis Now pilot program is focused on serving adults. However the Covid-19 pandemic has, in a variety of ways, unduly impacted schoolchildren. In response, Yolo County has taken great strides towards expanding access to mental health and crisis services for children and youth as well. Yolo County’s Health & Human Services Agency (HHS) recently implemented the Family Urgent Response System (FURS), a mobile crisis program that serves any current or former foster youths who reside in Yolo County and their caregivers. These mobile services provide support for mental health and other crises to support placement stability and to reduce the need for law enforcement response. HHS is working to expand the scope of this project to provide mobile mental health crisis services to children and youth by incorporating existing SB82 Triage Grant funding. Additionally, HHS recently applied for \$1.8 million of Crisis Care Mobile Units (CCMU) Grant funds to support the expansion of existing crisis response teams, and a portion of this funding would be used to develop a more robust mental health crisis response system through the FURS project, creating capacity to provide these critical services to children and youth countywide. (*continued p. 2*)

# Democratic News

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*(Gary Sandy continued from p. 1)*

Yolo County significantly expanded access to school-based mental health services in 2021 through the K-12 School Partnerships Project in collaboration with the Yolo County Office of Education and the school districts within the geographical catchment areas of Davis, West Sacramento, Woodland, and the rural areas of Winters and Esparto. This project seeks to ensure that school-age youth in Yolo County can access mental health services in a safe, comfortable environment that is familiar to them through a school-based service delivery system. The County recently executed contracts with local, community-based organizations to support this project. RISE, Inc. is the service provider for the rural catchment area which includes Winters and Esparto. CommuniCare Health Centers is the provider for both the Woodland and Davis catchment areas, and Victor Community Support Services is the provider for the West Sacramento catchment area.

Yolo County is currently funding the K-12 School Partnerships project with \$1.1 million per year of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds, a 4-year \$4 million-dollar grant from the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSAOAC), and by leveraging Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health funding. HHS is hopeful to grow the funding for this project over time to expand services within each catchment area through increased MHSA investments and other opportunities for shared investment from the school districts, managed care, and additional grant opportunities that may arise.

In addition to these school-based contracts, HHS has significantly increased investments in the overall children's system of care. HHS contracts with a number of local community-based organizations to provide a myriad of intensive, home, and community-based mental health services for children, youth and their families, including crisis intervention when necessary. Current contracts for community-based mental health services for children and youth total more than \$7 million per year.

These programs represent a major step forward in meeting the mental health needs of Yolo County residents.

*--Gary Sandy represents the third district on the Yolo County Board of Supervisors is a former mayor of Woodland and winner of a Weir-Williamson award in recognition of service to the Democratic party.*

## **Meeting the Challenge of the 2022 Elections** by Rick Gonzales

A potential crisis confronts us in the 2022 mid-term elections. Many candidates will be up for reelection in November including all statewide elected officers, the state legislature and Congressional offices. Sadly, history favors the GOP. Whenever a Democrat wins the presidential election, the opposition typically wins many seats in the following election. With the US Senate tied at 50 – 50 and Democrats holding a five-vote margin in the US House, there is very little wiggle room.

The main reason for this historical pattern is that fewer people vote in nonpresidential elections. Even though there are significantly fewer registered Republicans than either Democrats or Independents, they all vote. Sadly, the same can't be said about Democrats and Independents. In addition, the NRCC currently has a cash advantage over the DCCC.

So how do we change this paradigm? We will out-organize them. Remember what we did in the Recall Newsom election this past September. We organized. We successfully coordinated with other organizations and numerous volunteers resulting in vote of 83% to 17% against the Recall in Davis. We made a difference! We must do it again, but this time because it is a national election, we need to double our efforts and expand our outreach.

To make matters worse, the Republicans have enacted a modern Jim Crow era, passing 30 voter suppression laws in 18 states aimed at keeping Black and Latino voters away from the polls. In 181 House seats spanning 18 states, where they have complete control of re-districting, they will engage in extreme gerrymandering to tilt the playing field in their direction. Also, we must not forget the Trump factor. (*continued p.3*)

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***(Meeting the Challenge, continued from p. 2)***

Using his *Big Lie* to raise money, Trump and his Republicans have accumulated a \$100 million political slush fund to support his handpicked candidates for Congress in 2022. He will be holding numerous rallies this fall to generate turnout for Republican congressional candidates and promote his own White House ambitions. This will be a mid-term election cycle unlike any other, with a defeated, twice-impeached ex-president using the congressional campaigns as a proxy for his attempted return to power.

Can we overcome all of these obstacles? We have the will, the power and the know how to overcome these obstacles and it all comes down to organizing. Here's the local plan. We will open a HQ, send out postcards, put up lawn signs, knock on doors, make phone calls, contribute money and so much more. We just need to get it done. To all of our members, we will be contacting you to help us as we begin this most important campaign. We hope that you find some area where you can help. Are you ready?

**DDC's 2022 Election Goals**

The 2022 elections are *not* an off-year for the Club. Just like the 2020 Presidential election and the Recall election, the Club has to **equal or outraise its previous fundraising goals** to be able to **keep the House and Senate in Democratic** hands and help in competitive races throughout the country

The Membership Committee (Cochairs Rick Gonzales and Bob Bockwinkel) will be calling all the Club members to raise the money to meet our goals. In the last two campaigns, the DDC, on your behalf, donated over \$25,000 to competitive races. (In 2020, the DDC contributed support to Senators Kelly (Ariz.), Ossoff (Ga.) and Warnock (Ga.) among other crucial victories!) This year, we must do even more. The Club will be joined by the Democratic Central Committee, the VERBS, other Democratic clubs, Sister District and Indivisible in undertaking this group effort. If you wish to volunteer, Rick and Bob welcome your participation.

**DDC Board Elections**

Club officers are elected for a two-year term and the term of office for the current Board is expiring. Consequently, all offices of the DDC are up for election, which will occur at a future General Meeting of the Club to be announced. (Under the unusual circumstances of COVID, this election meeting will probably be held in spring and conducted by Zoom.) The Club Offices and the current office holders are listed on the page 2 side bar of this Newsletter. All Club Members are invited to nominate other members for election to these offices and to vote in the forthcoming election. If you wish to nominate a Club Member for election to any office, please contact Bob Bockwinkel (530-219-1896).

As a separate matter, the Board welcomes your participation. 2022 promises to be a pivotal election in determining our country's future making your participation vital. If you wish to make a difference in the outcome of these elections, please consider joining the Board; contact Bob Bockwinkel to discuss the opportunities.

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