



Memorandum

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director

RE: Catalyst Therapies LLC – Healthy Children’s Fund Mental Health Workforce Expansion Contract

DATE: **AUGUST 27, 2024**

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Catalyst Therapies for your review and signature.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

This agreement supports expansion of mental and behavioral health services to low-income children ages 0 – 5 and their caregivers. The Contractor serves a unique population primarily composed of children who are neurodivergent and developmentally delayed. Expansion of services will include:

- Additional specialized training for current and new staff in Play Therapy and Somatic Techniques
- Expansion of the Autistic Diagnostic Clinic to include mental health support at the time of diagnosis, care coordination for individual families, and guided family cohort support groups

Access to early childhood mental and behavioral health care is a critical gap in Whatcom County. This lack of access has serious and lasting consequences on children’s physical, emotional, social, and cognitive health. With early identification and investments in mental health treatment for young children and their families, expenditures in healthcare, education, criminal-legal system, and the labor market are reduced. Early identification and intervention also supports families in learning simple strategies for support, which leads to healthy development of the child and a healthier home environment and a reduction in the risks of childhood mood disorders.

This contract is awarded as a result of RFP 24-60 and supports Strategy 7 of the Healthy Children’s Fund, intended to expand behavioral and mental health services for vulnerable children, pregnant parents, and parents with young children.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this agreement, in an amount not to exceed \$199,417, is provided by the Healthy Children’s Fund. These funds are included in the 2024 budget. Council authorization is required per WCC 3.08.010 as funding for this contract exceeds \$40,000.

Please contact Ann Beck, Community Health & Human Services Manager at 360-778-6055 (ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions.