



Memorandum

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director
RE: Mobile Mama Strategies, Inc. – Mental Health Workforce Expansion Pilot Program Contract
DATE: JUNE 5, 2024

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Mobile Mama Strategies, Inc. for your review and signature.

- **Background and Purpose**

This contract supports Strategy 7 of the Healthy Children's Fund to recruit a mental and behavioral health workforce to Whatcom County. The Contractor will administer an internship pilot project that will increase access to perinatal mental health care and concurrently develop a local mental health workforce skilled in addressing perinatal mood and anxiety disorders for Medicaid enrollees and other low-income persons. Up to three interns will provide perinatal mental health services to Medicaid and other low-income eligible persons during the course of the internships. Services will be provided to 10-12 clients per week, per intern. Potential perinatal mental health topics that may be addressed by interns include the transition to motherhood/parenthood, depression, anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, psychosis, traumatic birth, pregnancy and perinatal loss, the effects of sexual abuse on the perinatal period, sex and intimacy, and safety planning.

Perinatal depression, the most common U.S. obstetric complication, and other mental health concerns significantly harm child and family well-being. Left untreated, they increase costly birth complications, weaken family support systems, and have lasting negative impacts on both parent's and children's physical and mental health. These consequences can include poor interpersonal relationships, increased risk of child abuse and neglect, developmental delays, and increased healthcare costs. Addressing perinatal mental health concerns can help children develop secure attachments and support their development and health through the life course. This contract assists in addressing these critical gaps in Whatcom County.

The Contractor will build the mental health system's local capacity to serve perinatal parents by recruiting, supervising, and mentoring interns enrolled in a graduate program that trains mental health therapists and clinical social workers who want to become licensed.

- **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$164,235, is provided by the Healthy Children's Fund. These funds are included in the 2024 budget. Council authorization is required, per WCC 3.08.100, as funding for this contract exceeds \$40,000.

Please contact Sarah Simpson, Child and Family Programs Supervisor at 360-778-6176 (SSimpson@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions.

Encl.