

Pauline Maxwell
Presiding Judge



SUPERIOR COURT *of* SANTA BARBARA

SANTA MARIA • LOMPOC • SANTA BARBARA

Darrel E. Parker
Court Executive Officer

Contact: Darrel E. Parker
Telephone: 805-614-6594
Email: dparker@sbcourts.org
Website: www.sbcourts.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARE ACT IS LAUNCHED IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

December 6, 2024 - Santa Barbara, California

Santa Barbara Superior Court officially launched its [Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment \(CARE\) Act Program](#) (known as CARE Court) on December 2 to connect individuals struggling with schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders with voluntary, community-based treatment through a civil court process.

The program is available to individuals aged 18 and older who are diagnosed with a schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorder, currently experiencing behaviors and symptoms associated with severe mental illness (SMI), unable to stabilize through existing voluntary treatment, and unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision.

The CARE process begins with an individual, family members, behavioral health professionals, directors of organizations or hospitals involved in their care filing a petition, which is reviewed by a Santa Barbara Superior Court judge to determine eligibility. If criteria are met, the court may order the County's Department of Behavioral Wellness to investigate and develop a CARE agreement or plan tailored to the participant's needs. Through this process, participants can receive support through the program for up to 24 months, ensuring continuity of care and ongoing access to essential services.

This program reflects a collaborative effort between the Superior Court, Department of Behavioral Wellness, Public Defender, and other community partners.

The CARE Act embodies Santa Barbara County's commitment to a compassionate, recovery-focused approach for addressing mental health challenges. By empowering individuals with

the resources and support they need, the program fosters connections within the community, prioritizing dignity and respect throughout the recovery process.

For more information about the CARE Court Program, including eligibility details and the forms to fill out a petition, visit [CARE Act | Santa Barbara County, CA - Official Website](#).