



## Memo

**To:** Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

**From:** Petra Puls, Executive Director

**Date:** February 15, 2024

**Re:** Recommendation to Approve Contract with Heluna Health for HealthySteps Grant

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### **Background**

In January 2023, First 5 Ventura County (F5VC) submitted an application in response to the California Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) Request for Applications for Round 1: Parent and Caregiver Support Programs and Practices of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI). First 5 Ventura County was awarded \$737,240 for a HealthySteps implementation start up grant. The start of the grant was initially set for April 2023.

The original proposal outlined a 27-months project to integrate F5VC HealthySteps Specialists into the pediatric team at up to three local pediatric primary care offices/clinics to provide short-term behavior and development consultation and referrals, intensive service when needed, and support screening efforts. A key component of piloting HealthySteps is developing strategies to sustain the program over time, including braiding together a diverse set of Medi-Cal funding mechanisms such as dyadic services and Community Health Worker benefits.

DHCS subcontracted with a third-party administrator, Heluna Health, for grant administration, and oversight and to offer training and technical assistance to improve grantee's capacity to provide quality and accessible youth behavioral health services across the state. After a kick-off meeting in January 2024, F5VC received the agreement, and due to the significant delays, the implementation period was reduced to approximately 15 months. In addition, the terms of the agreement raise concerns, as do additional requirements not originally outlined in the RfA.

F5VC staff is diligently working with Heluna Health on addressing concerns related to the viability of successfully implementing the project in a shortened grant period and other contract terms. Assuming resolution of all concerns, staff proposes to proceed with the HealthySteps grant. Similarly, should concerns not be adequately addressed and successful implementation of the project is unlikely, staff would not proceed and report back to the Commission.

### **Recommendation**

Recommended action would authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Heluna Health to receive Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative grant funding for implementing the HealthySteps pilot, with a contract term of March 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026 in an amount not to exceed \$737,240.