

Chair and Members of the Board:

I am Jenna Bell, a Mental Health Clinician for HHSA Adult and Aging. I'll get right to the point. Layoffs hurt people. They hurt not just those laid off, and not just the people we serve. They hurt you and me. They hurt our whole community, on a human level, and a financial one. I urge you to consider alternatives to these layoffs, such as furloughs, remote work, and reviewing highly paid positions that do not bring in revenue.

By eliminating positions such as administrative support staff, case managers, employment services specialists, and fleet services, you create longer wait times for vulnerable people in our community to receive crucial benefits. These benefits are not a luxury. People need them to feed their families, remain sheltered and clothed, and to get medical and mental health care and crucial medications. The layoffs you propose at HHSA translate to delays in assistance for our neighbors, and delays in care for severely mentally ill people, resulting in worsening conditions, more drug use on our streets, longer periods of homelessness and additional police contacts in our communities and near our local businesses.

The layoffs you propose hurt the local economy by driving down the appeal and reputation of our cities. With fewer people employed there will be less spending and less tax revenue for Yolo County.

These layoffs hurt individuals who have dedicated their lives to improving our community. It hurts their families, and their children, creating despair and financial distress. And when you lay off administrative positions, the workload does not go away. We are leaving money on the table by eliminating administrative positions. These tasks will be transferred to employees who could otherwise bring in money for the county through billing Medi-cal. Instead, we will bring in less revenue and become more burnt out and emotionally exhausted. Workloads are already unsustainable. This will inevitably result in some departures, further stressing a fragile workforce.

I believe you share in my desire for our county to be a success story. Please consider alternatives that would reduce the financial and human consequences that are on the table. HHSA relies on adequate staffing to deliver quality services to our community. Without it, the safety and integrity of our county will suffer. The citizens of our county are relying on you.

Thank you,

Jenna Bell