Hi, I’m Robin McCrae, CEO of Community Human Services. For 20 years, Behavioral Health has contracted with Community Human Services to provide outpatient Medi-Cal mental health services to children and adults. That program, the ACCESS to TREATMENT program, is now in jeopardy of closing.

We are largest community-based provider serving mild to moderate and moderate to severe mentally ill Medi-Cal residents in Monterey County. Our outpatient mental health services help people live better lives, and prevent bigger challenges in child welfare, law enforcement, homelessness, education, substance abuse and primary healthcare, including hospitalizations.

We currently have 400 active clients enrolled in outpatient mental health services. Our highly qualified team of bilingual/bicultural clinicians and trusted LGBTQ clinicians was built carefully over time. They are helping the Mental Health Commission reach its goal of increased Latino engagement by providing culturally relevant services in South and North County, as well as Salinas and Seaside, and by conducting mental health education and outreach to Latino communities through a Micro Innovation Grant.

In the past four years, the ACCESS to TREATMENT program provided over 2,500 children and adults with more than 20,000 hours of mental health assessment, counseling and case management services. But it also ran operating deficits totaling over $700,000, about $450,000 from last year alone. This is a trend that obviously cannot and will not continue.

And so we face a difficult problem and difficult decision. The Board of Community Human Services must consider taking action in November to close the program by Dec. 31, 2019. A program like this, dismantled, will not be easily re-assembled or re-placed.

We are asking for the Mental Health Commission’s support of this essential community mental health program. We are asking BH to commit to working with us to fix financial and structural elements in the contract to make the Access program work again. And, we ask that you support discretionary spending by the County Board of Supervisors, if that’s what it takes to do the right thing and save these valuable community mental health resources.

Thank you for listening.