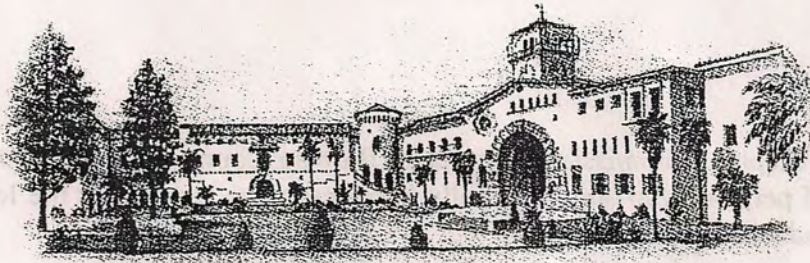


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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

RECEIVED

OCT 18 2011

BY: _____

October 4, 2011

Honorable Arthur A. Garcia
Assistant Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara Superior Court
312 East Cook Street
Post Office Box 5369
Santa Maria, California 93456-5369

Reference: Response to Santa Barbara Civil Grand Jury Titled, "*Homeless Mentally Ill Indigent Recidivism – This is not good for the County*"
(Published May 26, 2011 on the Grand Jury Web Site)

Judge Garcia:

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors (Board) is providing its response to the above-referenced Civil Grand Jury Report. Like the Civil Grand Jury, the Board recognizes the needs of and the multiple responses to homeless persons with mental illness. Effective use of the financial, human and programmatic resources of the Sherriff's Department and the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Department (ADMHS) is of utmost concern to this Board and to the public. We appreciate the Grand Jury's concern and desire to offer solutions to this long-term need.

As directed by the Grand Jury, responses are provided in accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code.

Finding 1a:

The current yearly estimate of the public and private cost of responding to, and otherwise dealing with, chronic homelessness exceeds \$12 million.

The Board agrees with the finding.

Finding 1b:

The 2006 Heroux Report, commissioned by Santa Barbara County, gave *estimates* as to the cost savings if persons who are chronically homeless were treated for the long-term rather than on an ad hoc basis.

The Board agrees with the finding.

Finding 1c:

There does not appear to be an official estimate for the cost to the Santa Barbara County community of chronically homeless persons who have mental illness and are *indigent* as they cycle in and out of jail.

The Board agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors directs the Santa Barbara County Executive Officer to produce a document comparing the current total yearly costs of the incarcerated mentally ill indigent homeless to the estimated total yearly cost of providing housing, medical and psychological services, case management, outpatient care, and other needed services to create stability for these particular individuals.

The Board recommends further analysis.

Comparing the current annual costs of incarcerating homeless persons who have mental illness and are indigent with the costs of providing housing, medical and psychological services, case management, outpatient care and other stabilizing services will take approximately four months by the County Executive Office. All of the services suggested as stabilizing for the targeted individuals who are homeless and have mental illness are currently available. Beyond the requested cost analysis, additional research may uncover additional strategies, best-practices or other evidence-based approaches that incentivizes ongoing use of the services.

Recommendation 2a:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff hold Prison Health Services Inc accountable for its contractual obligation to provide professional mental health screening during the booking process.

This recommendation has been implemented.

Since 2009, the Sheriff's Department assigned staff to manage contract compliance for the delivery of medical and mental health services by Prison Health Services Inc (PHS). The contract does not require a mental health screening during booking. Sheriff Department staff who conduct the booking process do receive specific training on

identifying those with mental health issues. PHS has also delivered training to assist all Custody Deputies in identifying individuals displaying mental health issues.

Recommendation 2b:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff hold Prison Health Services Inc accountable for its contractual obligation to provide a continuum of comprehensive mental health services from entry through post-release including a full-time licensed clinical social worker as a discharge planner.

This recommendation has been implemented.

Since 2009, PHS has employed a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, as well as a Psychiatric Nurse and a Mental Health Therapist. These staff can provide discharge planning seven days a week. Included in this discharge planning is coordination of medication and ongoing mental health care with ADMHS or other programs within the community.

Recommendation 2c:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff hold Prison Health Services Inc accountable for its contractual obligation to provide programs for the indigent mentally ill that provide the foundation for "creating a productive, crime-free lifestyle after incarceration."

This recommendation has been implemented.

Since 2009, PHS has been meeting its contractual obligation to provide a program that identifies and treats inmates with mental illness through a multi-disciplinary team of trained professionals who coordinate medical and mental health care through a seamless continuum of care from booking through post-release community-based services. The foundation is built for a successful transition to a crime free lifestyle. The ability to sustain that crime-free lifestyle is determined by the individual, mental health service providers and the community.

Recommendation 2d:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors calls for an audit of the Santa Barbara County Main Jail's inmate mental health care practices to determine the level of performance per the Board of Supervisors' contract with Prison Health Services, Inc., dated June 16, 2009.

This recommendation will not be implemented.

The Board received and accepted a report in January 18, 2011 that identified the service delivery challenges and successes. The Sheriff's Department continues to monitor the

contract expectations of PHS and discusses the findings and service-delivery performance at quarterly meetings attended by the contractor, Sheriff's Department, Mental Health Commission representation and ADMHS staff.

Finding 3a:

There are not enough mental health treatment beds in the community to treat sufficiently the number of chronic homeless mentally ill.

The Board agrees with this finding.

Finding 3d:

The California Corrections Standards Authority notes that some counties in the state found ways to institute best practices in housing and treating mentally ill inmates that go beyond meeting minimum *California Code of Regulations Title 15* requirements.

The Board agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 3a:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors directs the Santa Barbara County Executive Officer to produce a document that provides a cost estimate for establishing an out-patient treatment center for the mentally ill indigent homeless at the Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall or some other location.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

The Board understands the desire to examine new approaches. Through ADMHS's service delivery system, outpatient treatment resources currently exist in the community for the state-mandated population of individuals with serious mental illness. Funds provided by the State of California to provide these services have already been allocated in accordance with mandated requirements. New funds for a treatment center model do not appear to be available given the current financial constraints at the County and State levels.

Recommendation 3c:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Barbara County Sheriff jointly prepare a cost analysis of the actual cost of converting a proportional number of jail beds to licensed treatment beds for mentally ill inmates.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

The existing Santa Barbara County Jail facilities and staffing levels were neither designed nor able to accommodate, the requirements necessary to meet the California Code of

Regulations, Title 22. Analysis by the Institute for Medical Quality (IMQ) states that it is not feasible to meet the required standards in the current facility and would require the building of a new facility to be in compliance.

Finding 4:

Mental Health Treatment Courts are found to be effective in reducing both recidivism and relapse in mental illness.

The Board agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 4:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors seeks funding to expand Mental Health Treatment Courts in both North and South County to achieve levels of service found in 2001-02.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

The Board is supportive of services to homeless persons with mental illness, including Mental Health Court. As stated in the report, Mental Health Court services continue in North and South County, but participants must meet medical necessity or target population criteria (serious mental illness) to receive treatment through ADMHS. Since any expansion of service beyond the target population would require the use of extremely limited County General Fund dollars, it is unlikely that the expansion request will be able to be considered in the near future.

Finding 6a:

There are over 50 agencies, including public and private non-profit, providing some aspect of support to the mentally ill, indigent, homeless, and jail recidivist.

The Board agrees with the finding.

Finding 6b:

There is no centralized, coordinating entity with the authority to marshal all public and private non-profit resources engaged in providing services to the mentally ill, indigent, homeless, and jail recidivist.

The Board agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 6a:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors directs Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services to take leadership and responsibility in planning and coordinating all

public and private non-profit agency efforts in providing services to homeless persons who have mental illness, are indigent, with histories of jail recidivism.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

The Board recognizes the importance of public leadership played by local government in addressing complex and long-term issues. The Board also recognizes the critical leadership role demonstrated by the Sheriff's Department and ADMHS in proactively addressing the challenges faced by homeless persons with serious mental illness. ADMHS is the Mental Health Plan provider and coordinates all mental health services for the state mandated population of persons with serious mental illness including those who qualify for services paid by Medi-Cal and those who are indigent. This recommendation would require ADMHS to operate outside of their mandate and would require the use of County General Funds to conduct planning and coordination efforts beyond the delivery of service to Medi-Cal beneficiaries and the target population.

Recommendation 6b:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors directs Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services to establish measurable outcomes and report its progress in addressing the issues related to the mentally ill, indigent, homeless, and jail recidivism to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors at least twice yearly.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the next six months.

The Board recognizes that collecting high-quality performance data is a vital tool in responding to critical public needs. Currently ADMHS collects data on what mental health services are offered and delivered to homeless persons who have mental illness and are indigent. This data is used to monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of services provided. The Sheriff's Department will report on the number of rearrested individuals that have been assessed for mental illness. The Board will schedule an additional report from ADMHS and the Sheriff's Department each December to monitor progress.

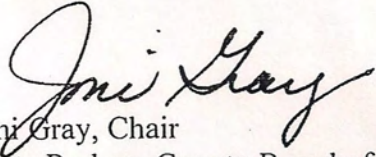
Recommendation 6c:

That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors evaluates the effectiveness of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services' leadership in achieving measurable outcomes in addressing the issues related to the mentally ill, indigent, homeless, and jail recidivist on a yearly basis.

This recommendation has already been implemented.

The Board regularly evaluates ADMHS leadership in achieving the measureable mental health service outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joni Gray". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Joni Gray, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Chandra Wallar, County Executive Officer
Bill Brown, Sheriff
Ann Detrick, Director, Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health