

COUNTY OF VENTURA
MEMORANDUM
HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

Date: September 18, 2001

TO: Honorable Bruce A. Clark
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: Barbara A. Journet, Director-Human Resources 

SUBJECT: Response to Grand Jury Recommendations Regarding County Hiring
Procedures for Filling Critical Behavioral Health Vacancies

This memorandum is written in response to recommendations made by the Grand Jury in the 2000-2001 Final Report. The recommendation of the Grand Jury was as follows:

Revamp County hiring procedures so that appropriate priorities are established by Human Resources for filling critical vacancies.

Response

We do not believe that hiring procedures need to be revised to set appropriate priorities for filling critical vacancies. Several critical events impacted the filling of vacancies in Behavioral Health. When the Behavioral Health Department was placed back under the jurisdiction of the Health Care Agency, there was an exodus of staff by personal choice and through other types of terminations. Management of the department also changed and brought with it a new treatment emphasis. Additionally, there were County-wide budget issues which included a hiring freeze on the department positions, and specific billing cost issues in Behavioral Health.

The result was extensive media coverage that had a major impact on the County's appeal to outside applicants. The media coverage, the budget issues, the hiring freeze, and the staff exodus made it difficult to attract qualified applicants for the Behavioral Health Department. Additionally, with a change in managers, there was not an understanding of the existing recruitment and hiring procedures which resulted in lost time before recruitments could be opened. This office asked the

department to prioritize its requests and worked with them to streamline the evaluation process.

It did take several months to establish lists and begin a flow of candidates eligible for hire primarily because of the hiring freeze. The aforementioned factors, however, were unusual and atypical of the regular hiring process.

We continue to experience a turnover in professional and technical positions in the department. We do, however, maintain continuous, open recruitments for many positions. Some positions, because of their technical nature, are and will continue to be difficult to fill because of the lack of qualified individuals in the labor market. It is our belief that the current recruitment and hiring procedures sufficiently address the department's needs. We will continue to work with them to address management issues and develop a better understanding of administrative procedures.

If there are any questions, please contact me at 654-2561.

c: Charles M. Malone, Foreman-Grand Jury