



county of ventura

Human Services Agency

Ted Myers
Director

July 26, 2004

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VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

JUL 29 2004

The Honorable Bruce A. Clark
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Ventura County Hall of Justice
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDING JUDGE

Dear Judge Clark:

This is in response to the letter dated May 21, 2004 requesting a response to the Ventura County 2003-2004 Grand Jury report entitled, *Under-Served Children in Ventura County*. The Human Services Agency appreciates the thoughtful analysis and conclusions included in the report. We are deeply committed to strengthening the linkages with the various service systems so that children's and families' needs can be met without gaps.

Grand Jury Conclusions:

- C-01 The four population groups covered in this report are being served by HSA and other county and community agencies, but there are still critical gaps.
- C-02 Waiting lists, staffing, inter-organizational cooperation, legislative restrictions and limited funding can be barriers to providing services to these children.
- C-03 There is a significant potential impact on not only the youth involved, but on the community, both socially and financially, if services are deferred or delayed and the child's problems are aggravated. The individual's situation can deteriorate to the point where the level of needed service has escalated and law enforcement, detention facilities, the court system, and hospitals become involved at a greater cost to the community. A stitch in time saves nine.

Grand Jury Recommendations:

- R-01 Continued efforts should be made to preserve and develop the programs as outlined in this report.

R-02 Funding should be aggressively sought to provide for the programs outlined in this report, rather than wait until more costly services are required.

R-03 Continued funding as well as a more affordable site should be located for Safe Harbor in Ventura.

The Human Services Agency (HSA) was requested to respond to recommendations R-01 and R-02:

1. HSA concurs with the recommendation but is only partially able to implement due to budget constraints. During the recent budget process, HSA advocated to restore eleven vacant children's services social worker positions that had been deleted as a budget reduction. Of those, four were restored. Staff continues to carry heavier caseloads.
2. HSA aggressively seeks to implement the recommendation by searching for new funding streams and finding ways to maximize current funding including grants, partnerships and collaboration and outsourcing services to community-based organizations. For example, early intervention services at several schools are funded by local organizations (such as First 5) providing matching funds to draw down equal amounts of uncapped federal funds.

Should you have additional questions, please contact me at (805) 652-7601.

Sincerely,



TED MYERS, DIRECTOR
Human Services Agency

cc: Linda Henderson