

August 24, 2009

**J. Matthew Carroll**  
Assistant County Executive Officer

**Paul Derse**  
Chief Financial Officer

**John K. Nicoll**  
Human Resources Director

Honorable Kevin J. McGee  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Superior Court of California, Ventura County  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: **Board of Supervisors' Responses to 2008-09 Grand Jury Reports**

Dear Judge McGee:

In accordance with State requirements, the responses from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to four 2008-09 Grand Jury reports, "Detention Facilities: Condition and Management", "Ventura County Pensions: An Uncontrollable Cost", "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails" and "Land Use Permitting Process: Get to Excellence Plan" are hereby submitted. The Board approved the responses, which pertain to county government under its authority, on August 11, 2009 as *modified*.

The first of two modifications was that the following statement be added to this transmittal letter, "The Board's approval of the response to the Pension Report does not imply a change to established policy or commit or limit future actions by the Board in these areas."

The second modification was regarding its response to the "Mentally Ill in Ventura County Jails" report to the effect that the County is working to implement measures to keep the mentally ill out of jail and to establish alternative housing for mentally ill inmates. The Board's response to Recommendation 2 of the subject report has been revised to reflect this modification

The response to the remaining report under the Board's authority, "Is Your Favorite Restaurant Clean?" is being finalized and will be submitted for Board approval in September, after which it will be forwarded to you.

A copy of the response to the report "Inmate Grievance Procedure", previously submitted directly to the Grand Jury by the Sheriff, is included here for informational purposes only, as the approval of the Board is not required for responses from elected officials.

The County Clerk and Recorder has advised this office that although his response to the report, "Did Your Vote Count?" does not require Board approval, he plans to place it on the Board's agenda in September, at which time the County Clerk and Recorder will provide a copy to the Court.

Should you have any questions, please call Matt Carroll at 654-2864 or Kathleen Van Norman at 654-2566.

Respectfully submitted,

  
MARTY ROBINSON  
County Executive Officer

RECEIVED

SEP 1 2009

VENTURA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

Enclosures – BoS Response to four 2008-09 Grand Jury Reports

cc: County Clerk, James Becker  
Superior Court Jury Services (3 copies as listed for distribution)

- For Jury Services, Richard Goldner, Court Program Supervisor
- For transmittal to State Archives
- For transmittal to Grand Jury

Hall of Administration L # 1940  
800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 • (805) 654-3656 • FAX (805) 654-5106

BOARD MINUTES  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF VENTURA, STATE OF  
CALIFORNIA

SUPERVISORS STEVE BENNETT, LINDA PARKS,  
KATHY I. LONG, PETER C. FOY AND JOHN C. ZARAGOZA  
August 11, 2009 8:30 a.m.

228.3

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE – Approval of Responses to Four 2008-09 Ventura County Grand Jury Final Reports Entitled "Detention Facilities: Condition and Management", "Ventura County Pension: An Uncontrollable Cost", "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails" and "Land Use Permitting Process Get to Excellence Plan" for Submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

- (X) All board members are present.
- (X) The following persons are heard: Matt Carroll, Marty Robinson, and Meloney Roy.
- (X) Upon motion of Supervisor Long, seconded by Supervisor Zaragoza, and duly carried, the Board hereby Approves as Modified with Direction to staff that statements be added to the transmittal letter, that the Board's approval of the response to the Pension Report does not imply a change to existing County policies or the approval of any new policy positions; and regarding its response to the Mentally Ill in Ventura County Jails Report the County is working to implement measures to keep the mentally ill out of jail and to establish alternative housing for mentally ill inmates.

By:   
Deputy Clerk of the Board

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the annexed instrument  
is a true and correct copy of the document  
which is on file in this office.  
MARTY ROBINSON, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors,  
County of Ventura, State of California.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk of the Board

Item # 42  
08/11/09

August 11, 2009

County of Ventura  
Board of Supervisors  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Subject: Approval of Responses to Four 2008-09 Ventura County Grand Jury Final Reports Entitled "Detention Facilities: Condition and Management", "Ventura County Pension: An Uncontrollable Cost", "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails" and "Land Use Permitting Process Get to Excellence Plan" for Submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court**

Recommendation:

That your Board approves the responses to the four subject Grand Jury reports pertaining to County government under your authority for submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in accordance with State statute.

Discussion:

Penal Code §933.05 requires that your Board comment on the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury pertaining to county government under your authority. The 2008-09 Ventura County Grand Jury issued 11 individual reports, seven of which pertain to County government.

Responses from appointed agency and department heads to four of the seven County government reports are addressed in this letter. These responses have been coordinated through the County Executive Office and are submitted for your approval.

For your reference, the report titles and respondents listed in the Grand Jury Final Report are summarized in the table below.

Board of Supervisors  
Responses to Four 2008-09 Grand Jury Reports  
August 11, 2009  
Page 3 of 3

In all, a total of five responses were required from the Board of Supervisors. Four are included here, the fifth, a response to "Is Your Favorite Restaurant Clean?" will be brought forward at a later date. One other response, to the report "Did Your Vote Count?" was deemed discretionary in that the Grand Jury indicated a response, while not required, would be accepted from your Board. We feel a response from the Board in this case is not necessary as a planned presentation to your Board in September by the County-Clerk and Recorder will address the issues. The Board's required responses were prepared on your behalf by CEO staff and are included in the Exhibits attached to this letter.

The responses submitted under Exhibits 2, 3, 4 and 5 that pertain to County government under your control will serve as your Board's response to the subject 2008-09 Grand Jury Final Reports to be filed as indicated in the above recommended action along with any additional comments your Board may wish to make.

If your Board does elect to amend responses submitted from agencies headed by appointed officials or if your Board elects to change a responses prepared on your behalf by the County Executive's office, then CEO staff, at your direction, will make such changes or additions prior to submitting the responses to the Presiding Judge.

As you are aware, elected officials submit their Grand Jury responses directly to the Presiding Judge. Although your approval is not required for responses from elected officials, a copy of the Sheriff's response to the report "Inmate Grievance Procedure" from the Sheriff's Department is included for your information as Exhibit 1.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact ~~J. Matthew Carroll at 654-2864 or Kathleen Van Norman at 654-2566.~~

  
MARTY ROBINSON  
County Executive Officer

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Response to "Inmate Grievance Procedure"
- Exhibit 2 – Response to "Detention Facilities: Condition and Management"
- Exhibit 3 – Response to "Ventura County Pension: An Uncontrollable Cost"
- Exhibit 4 – Response to "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails"
- Exhibit 5 – Response to "Land Use Permitting Process: Get to Excellence Plan"

**August 11, 2009**

**EXHIBIT 4**

**RESPONSE TO 2008-09 GRAND JURY REPORT**

**“Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails**

**FROM**

**Board of Supervisors**

**District Attorney\***

**Sheriff\***

**Probation**

**Health Care Agency-Behavioral Health**

**Public Defender**

\* DA and Sheriff responses are included for information only, Board approval is not required.



## County Executive Office MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 11, 2009

SUBJECT: Response to 2008-2009 Grand Jury Report "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails" from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**R-01:** Ventura County should formalize the current MARRT program into a permanent Mental Health Court with the necessary funding and assignment of full-time personnel from each of the collaborative departments.

**RESPONSE: Partially Concur.**

While the Board agrees that the MARRT program has been highly successful and the next logical step would be to form a Mental Health Court, it would be very fiscally challenging at this time. Likewise, the dedication of full-time staff from each of the departments for a Mental Health Court that would meet one day a week may not be feasible or cost efficient as the Public Defender has pointed out in his response.

We would agree with the recommendation by the Behavioral Health Department to continue the current MARRT treatment track and to focus any expansion on serious cases that have not participated in the MARRT program for various reasons. We would encourage all concerned departments to seek additional funding to support any expansion. It may also be helpful to further explore other alternatives to serve the mentally ill such as the proposed Adult Crisis Center.

**R-02:** Ventura County should ensure that there is sufficient and suitable housing necessary to support an effective Mental Health Court system.

**RESPONSE: Concur.**

The Board agrees that appropriate housing is necessary for an effective Mental Health Court system. We support the approach by Behavioral Health Department to collaborate with community-based housing development partners. Forty-eight additional housing units are in various stages of development and we recommend continuing these efforts to implement measures to keep the mentally ill out of jail and to establish alternative housing for mentally ill inmates. As this kind of housing development requires significant monetary and staffing investment, the identification of additional funding will be required. More research should be conducted on the costs efficiency of such housing.

cc: Paul Derse  
Kathleen Van Norman



# Ventura County Probation Agency

---

Karen J. Staples  
Director/Chief Probation Officer

August 4, 2009

Ventura County Grand Jury  
800 South Victoria Avenue, L#3751  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Re: Ventura County Grand Jury 2008 – 2009  
Final Report – Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails**

Dear Grand Jury members:

This letter was drafted in response to the above listed report issued on June 15, 2009. It will serve as my response and the official position of the Ventura County Probation Agency as requested by your Jury as part of the above entitled report, ***Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails***.

The Ventura County Probation Agency has been an integral partner in Ventura County's Multi-Agency Referral and Recovery Team (MARRT) since April 2007. The MARRT program was primarily developed to provide mental health resources and specialized probation supervision services to adult offenders with serious mental illness. These specialized services include, but are not limited to, the following: substance abuse counseling, general psychotherapy, group therapy, intensive case management, and psychiatric medication. MARRT is made up of representatives from the Probation Agency, Superior Court, Behavioral Health, the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and the Sheriff's Department.

The Probation Agency has a long history of working collaboratively with mentally ill offenders. In 2003, the Probation Agency received federal funding through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to initiate a juvenile mental health court program in Ventura County. As such, the Probation Agency entered into collaborative relationships with Behavioral Health, Juvenile Court, Public Defender, and District Attorney to implement the Ventura County Juvenile Mental Health Court program (appropriately named "Adelante" which is a Spanish term for "moving forward"). Through the years, the Adelante program has gone through a few changes in funding streams and personnel. Our current juvenile mental health court program, "Solutions", is operating under the same core components as was listed in the initial 2003 design. This program has shown great success in substantially decreasing the number of psychiatric hospitalization admissions among program participants and drastically reducing the number of Court-ordered commitments to out-of-home placement homes/facilities.



Date: July 22, 2009

To: Ventura County Grand Jury

From: Meloney Roy, Director Behavioral Health Department  
Michael Powers, Director Health Care Agency

RE: Behavioral Health, Health Care Agency Response to Grand Jury Report 2008-2009  
Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails  
Date Issued: June 15, 2009

The Behavioral Health Department, Health Care Agency (Department) appreciates the 2008-2009 Grand Jury's thoughtful review of this important topic and is in agreement with the direction and conclusions of the report. We have been invited to respond to the Grand Jury's two recommendations:

*R-01 Ventura County should formalize the current MARRT program into a permanent Mental Health Court with the necessary funding and assignment of full-time personnel from each of the collaborative departments.*

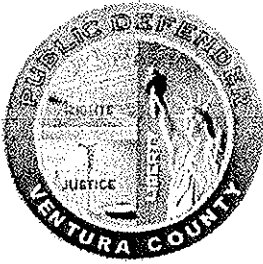
The Department agrees that the MARRT program has been clinically successful, as well as instrumental, in forging the working relationships necessary for the successful implementation of a Mental Health Court. The Department agrees that the development of a Mental Health Court would improve the rehabilitation, treatment, and quality of life for our consumers with serious mental illness. We also feel strongly that persons with mental illness are best treated in environments that support wellness and recovery. A Mental Health Court might also reduce the overall cost for the County, as evidence suggests that improved intervention reduces justice costs. The Department would envision the creation of a Mental Health Court as an extension of the relationships forged by the MARRT program.

Currently, the MARRT program consults on a weekly basis for approximately one half day with the multi-agency team. This time includes approximately one hour in open court. A natural expansion would be to increase to a full day of multi-agency consultation and court time. We would recommend that the current MARRT treatment track continue much as it is, to build on the processes that are in place and working. We



Health Court. The support needed for these individuals' housing would require the identification of additional funding.

As a last note, we would also like to take the opportunity to make a short comment regarding the other agencies with whom we have worked collaboratively in the MARRT Program. We are very grateful to the District Attorney, Sheriff, Probation Agency, and Public Defender, who have all shown sincere compassion and professionalism when working with our consumers in our justice related programs. It is very gratifying for the Department to work with such a dedicated group, committed to helping those citizens of our County in most need.



## OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

COUNTY OF VENTURA

**DUANE A. DAMMEYER**

**PUBLIC DEFENDER**

Stephen P. Lipson  
Assistant Public Defender

Ann M. Favor  
Chief Investigator

The Public Defender offers the following response to the Grand Jury Report "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails" which was released on or about June 13, 2009:

The Public Defender's office offers the following response to Grand Jury recommendation R-01:

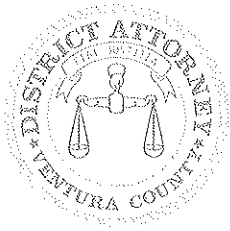
The Public Defender's office recognizes the importance of continuity in the personnel assigned to collaborative courts in general and a Mental Health Court in particular. Knowledge of each client's unique situation is necessary to fashion the most appropriate treatment for them and to modify the treatment plan as events dictate. The Public Defender's office has assigned a single attorney to the existing MARRT program and would assign a single attorney to a Mental Health Court as well. Barring illness or vacation, it is expected that the assigned attorney would appear at each session of the Mental Health Court.

The Grand Jury, in Recommendation 01, suggests that full-time personnel be assigned to a Mental Health Court. That recommendation will not be implemented in the foreseeable future.

Currently, the MARRT Court meets only one afternoon per week. That schedule is sufficient, given the number of persons served in the current MARRT Court. It is unlikely that a formalized Mental Health Court would be allocated sufficiently greater court time. The Public Defender would not be able to allocate a full time person to a court assignment that occupied a mere 10% of the work week. Therefore, the Deputy Public Defender assigned to the Mental Health Court would continue to have another assignment. Currently the attorney assigned to the MARRT Court is regularly assigned to an arraignment court and a substitute for that court is found for those afternoons when the MARRT Court is in session. A similar arrangement would be used for Mental Health Court. Given the Public Defender's very limited attorney resources relative to assigned caseloads, it is unreasonable to expect that a full time attorney could be allocated to Mental Health Court any time soon.

Duane A. Dammeyer  
Public Defender





# OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

## County of Ventura, State of California

**GREGORY D. TOTTEN**  
District Attorney

**JAMES D. ELLISON**  
Chief Assistant District Attorney

**MICHAEL K. FRAWLEY**  
Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Criminal Prosecutions

**GREGORY W. BROSE**  
Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Special Prosecutions

**MICHAEL D. SCHWARTZ**  
Special Assistant District Attorney

**ROBERT A. BRINER**  
Chief Investigator

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Kevin J. McGee  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
County of Ventura  
800 S. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009

Mr. Ron Zenone  
Foreperson, 2008-2009  
Ventura County Grand Jury  
800 S. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: **Response to 2008-2008 Grand Jury Report**  
Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails

Dear Judge McGee and Mr. Zenone:

As required by California Penal Code section 933.05, this letter is a response to the recommendation of the Ventura County 2008/2009 Grand Jury Report entitled "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails."

Recommendation R-01:

Ventura County should formalize the current MARRT program into a permanent mental health court with the necessary funding and assignment of full-time personnel from each of the collaborative departments.

RECEIVED

JUL 16 2009

VENTURA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

The Honorable Kevin J. McGee  
Mr. Ron Zenone  
July 14, 2009  
Page 2

Response to Recommendation R-01

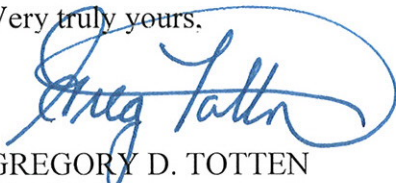
The MARRT program is a valuable program and should continue to play an important role in the criminal justice system. It is a wonderful example of how multiple agencies can work well together to achieve positive results. There is not, however, a present need to assign personnel full time to a mental health court.

The criteria used to evaluate admission of an individual to the MARRT program have been formulated in recognition that not every mentally ill offender in the criminal justice system can be treated in the program. For example, sexual assault, domestic violence, serious and violent felony offenders, and those whose primary problem is substance abuse are most often not suitable for handling in a mental health court. The program is not currently turning away defendants who qualify for participation; thus, not all components would need to increase their level of resources devoted to the program.

It is important that each agency designate personnel who will work in the program for extended periods of time. The District Attorney has had the same deputy assigned to the program for more than 18 months. This deputy prepares for each court session in advance and reviews the criminal histories and other information available on candidates for the program. Currently, the work that must take place in the courtroom is getting done in one half-day session per week. There is of course much more work done outside of court by probation and health care agency officials. Defendants in the program require a high level of attention. Additional resources would allow for increased probation supervision and therapy.

The present program functions as a mental health court and should be formalized and made permanent by the county with a specific dedication of funds to each participating agency.

Very truly yours,



GREGORY D. TOTTEN  
District Attorney

GDT\cb

pc: Marty Robinson, County Executive Officer



# VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

- **BOB BROOKS**  
SHERIFF
- **MARK BALL**  
UNDERSHERIFF

800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CA 93009 PHONE (805) 654-2380 FAX (805) 645-1391

June 24, 2009

Ventura County Grand Jury  
800 South Victoria Ave. L#3751  
Ventura, California 93009

RECEIVED

JUL - 6 2009

VENTURA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

Dear Mr. Foreman and Grand Jury Members:

Below is the required response to the 2008-2009 Grand Jury report titled "Mentally Ill Housed in Ventura County Jails."

## Recommendation R-01

*Ventura County should formalize the current MARRT program into a permanent Mental Health Court with the necessary funding and assignment of full time personnel from each of the collaborative departments. (C-01 through C-10)*

## Response:

I concur with your findings relative to mentally ill persons housed in Ventura County Jails. I am also in full agreement with your expressed appreciation of the hard work and efforts of the Multi-Agency Referral and Recovery Team (MARRT).

A Mental Health Court (MHC) model, as described in your report, appears to be a cost effective and potentially effective way to deal with persons who are designated or diagnosed as being mentally ill. From my perspective as Sheriff, inmates who are mentally ill must be housed in accordance with their unique situation, which impacts the increasingly crowded conditions in the county jail facilities. Although not all of the subjects considered for MARRT diversion are current jail inmates, all have been sentenced or have jail time pending that could result in a future jail term. Many of these individuals would be better served in a housing and treatment program set up outside the county jail environment.

As the Sheriff of Ventura County, I wholeheartedly agree that the MARRT approach has effectively and successfully placed many persons in appropriate treatment plans outside of adult detention facilities. Since this team was formed, hundreds of persons have been evaluated and diverted from serving their jail sentences in our custody. Although the Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) Grant funding is no longer available,

**SPECIAL SERVICES**  
6401 Telephone Road, Suite 200  
Ventura, CA 93003  
(805) 477-7011 FAX (805) 477-7010

**PATROL SERVICES**  
2101 East Olsen Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362  
(805) 494-8261 FAX (805) 494-8295

**DETENTION SERVICES**  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 654-2305 FAX (805) 654-3500

**SUPPORT SERVICES**  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009  
(805) 654-3926 FAX (805) 654-2109

the MARRT member agencies have collectively elected to continue this important and successful program.

Your recommendation of formalizing the existing MARRT group into a MHC is encouraging and acknowledges the need for effectively and compassionately addressing the needs of the mentally ill. However, based on the statistics of the current program to date, it would not support full-time staffing from the Sheriff's Department. I am fully committed to MARRT and propose the continued utilization of available and existing resources on a part-time basis, until such a time the program expands to a full-time workload. This is especially important during these uncertain economic times. Additionally, without the partial funding provided in the past by the MIOCR Grant, any staffing desires beyond the use of current department members would likely not occur in the near future.

Hopefully, the information contained in this response will satisfy the interests and findings in your recent report.

Sincerely,



BOB BROOKS  
Ventura County Sheriff

c: Honorable Kevin J. McGee, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, Ventura County