

Response to 2015-2016 Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement Issues

Report Date: May 24, 2016 Responding Agency/Dept. Health Care Agency

Response Prepared by: Elaine Crandall Title: Behavioral Health Director

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: FI-06
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-01 have been partially implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 9/13/14 Signed: Linda Parks
Linda Parks – Chair, Board of Supervisors



Number of pages attached: 2

ATTEST: MICHAEL POWERS
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura, State of California
By: Tom Harris
Deputy Clerk of the Board

GRAND JURY

Public Access to Conflict of Interest Codes

F1-06 – The Grand Jury found that the law enforcement community has an increased awareness of the magnitude of mental health issues to be addressed. While the addition of the medical/mental health facility at Todd Road will be a valuable asset, the facility cannot, by itself, be the complete solution for the issues posed by the Severe Persistent Mental Illness cases in the jails, let alone the other mental health support challenges. The problem clearly requires attention to characterize and identify solutions.

D Steinberg and D Mills said it best:

"Although deinstitutionalization was originally understood as a humane way to offer more suitable services to the mentally ill in community-based settings, some politicians seized upon it as a way to save money by shutting down institutions without providing any meaningful treatment alternatives. This callousness has created a one-way road to prison for massive numbers of impaired individuals and the inhumane warehousing of thousands of mentally ill people."

Adding to the complexity of deinstitutionalization is the shortage of available hospital beds for mentally ill individuals. Throughout Ventura County, there used to be 270 psychiatric hospital beds available at various hospitals. Now, the only available beds are 30 beds at Ventura County Medical Center and 87 at Vista Del Mar Hospital. This shortage has severely impacted not only the jail facilities, but also hospital emergency rooms.

R-01. The Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Sheriff, working with the County Behavioral Health Division, provide the Board of Supervisors with an annual data based assessment of mental health issues in the law enforcement environment. Based on this assessment, the Grand Jury recommends that these agencies expand existing programs (such as 12 Step programs) and propose additional programs to both mitigate those issues and help transition inmates with mental health issues back to "mainstream society".

RESPONSE:

This recommendation has been partially implemented in that the Behavioral Health Department currently supports the Sheriff Department's continuing efforts to keep the Board apprised of mental health issues in the custody and law enforcement. At the same time, the Behavioral Health Department, working with the County Executive Office, continues to research grant opportunities and best practices to expand services to transition inmates to support their recovery and success in the community. The Board of Supervisors, County Executive Office and the Behavioral Health Department supports the recommendation to work with the Ventura County Sheriff to provide an assessment of mental health issues in the law enforcement environment and will work with the Sheriff to determine the scope, timing and format of such an assessment and report to the Board. Currently, the Behavioral Health

Department provides substance abuse transitional services to inmates of the Ventura County Todd Road Jail as follows:

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1. The Alternative Action Program is the provider that provides an evidenced based program known as Moral Recognition Program to AB109 clients and drug treatment services. This program conducts approximately 129 intakes per year.
2. VCBH also conducts Mental Health Court services and Competency placement assessments and recommendations.
3. VCBH, has a transition specialist located at the Todd Road Jail. The transition specialist assists approximately 2,000 inmates per year, with multiple services including coordinating prescriptions, scheduling outpatient appointments, and providing other linkages to outpatient services and resources.

Current efforts to expand programs are an ongoing process. At this time, the department has re-structured the scope of work for Peer Supports to assist and support clients with mental illness leaving the jail to make their out-patient appointments or to enroll them into services. VCBH is also preparing a Letter of Intent for a grant with the National Institute of Health to expand services for Substance Abuse Services and Mental Health Services for people leaving the jail.

As previously noted, the Behavioral Health Department continues to research grant opportunities and best practices to expand services both within the jail system and transitioning inmates to support their recovery and success in the community.