

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Marin's Mentally Ill: – What's being Done?

Report Date: May 13, 2015

Response by: Marin County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: 3, 5
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 1, 2, 4

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation numbered 2 has been implemented.
- Recommendations numbered 1, 3 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

Date: August 4, 2015

Signed: _____

Number of pages attached 3

Marin County Board of Supervisors

Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report
"Marin's Mentally Ill: – What's being Done?" - May 13, 2015

FINDINGS

- F1. Despite Mental Health and Substance Use Services (MHSUS) providing a comprehensive range of mental health programs and services, there are major gaps and bottlenecks in Marin County's mental health system.**

Response: Partially Disagree.

A shortage of Medi-Cal reimbursable psychiatric hospitals in the Greater Bay Area sometimes delays hospitalization. Counties are in competition for available beds and are dependent on the receiving hospitals to accept admissions in a timely manner, which is not atypical statewide.

A gap in the current mental health service delivery system is the lack of a Medi-Cal certified Adult Transitional Residential Program. Planning for this level of care is underway and initial funds have been identified. This program will serve 10 to 12 persons diagnosed with serious mental illness. The goals of the program will be to reduce admissions to locked, sub-acute facilities, reduce length of stay in these types of facilities, and reduce duration of hospitalizations.

MHSUS currently provides case management services, but an identified need is expansion in capacity for adult clients. Additional case managers were included in the Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget, but additional capacity still is needed. To meet this growing need, additional case managers will be added during FY 2015-16.

- F2. Since MHSUS's outcome metrics lack clear meaning and their program costs are not defined, neither the Grand Jury nor the public is able to assess the programs' effectiveness.**

Response: Partially Disagree.

MHSUS meets all state and federal requirements for outcome and performance measures, but the need for more readily usable reports for program and public use has been identified. An evaluation of the capacity of current data systems and staff to perform data collection and analysis already has started.

Documenting actual costs by program is an area that needs improvement. MHSUS tracks budgets and costs by program; however, the process and system are manual. The County's current financial tracking system has limitations. The County will be implementing a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system in 2016, which aims to provide better functionality for tracking direct expenditures by program.

- F3. There is insufficient housing for the mentally ill in Marin County, resulting in costly out of county and/or unnecessarily higher level placements.**

Response: Agree.

MHSUS currently provides housing and/or supported housing for over 400 individuals receiving specialty mental health services. However, the need for affordable and accessible housing is greater than existing capacity in Marin – both for MHSUS clients and residents generally. This shortage of affordable housing can result in the use of more expensive housing alternatives.

- F4. MHSUS' failure to identify and purchase additional housing for the mentally ill during the recent recession, despite having \$1.4 million in Cal/HFA grant funds available since 2009 for that specific purpose, is unfathomable.**

Response: Disagree.

MHSUS allocated approximately \$785,000 of the Mental Health Services Act housing funds to purchase five units of permanent housing in the Fireside development. State requirements would not permit the purchase of existing houses. With the onset of the recession and a commensurate decline in new building, additional housing development projects could not be identified. Health and Human Services contracted with a housing development consultant five years ago but still could not identify a receptive construction partner. State requirement changes effective January 1, 2015 increased our flexibility to access these funds, including for purchase of existing units. The County is completing a planning process for use of the funds and will transfer the balance from Cal/HFA to MHSUS upon Board approval.

- F5. The potential closing of the Helen Vine Detox Center, the only Marin County public detox center, represents a huge loss of service and treatment to individuals with mental health and/or alcohol and substance abuse issues.**

Response: Agree.

The Helen Vine Detox Center is a valuable Marin resource for the treatment of substance use disorders. Consistent and diligent efforts in collaboration with Buckelew Foundation are being made to find an acceptable new location prior to expiration of the current lease. There is strong commitment on behalf of both the County and Buckelew to avoid a disruption of services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- R1. Marin County Board of Supervisors and Mental Health and Substance Use Services develop a programmatic approach to budgeting able to track individual mental health program costs and benefits along with using quantifiable data to analyze programs for effectiveness and efficiency.**

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented but will be in the future.

The County will be implementing a new enterprise resources planning software application in 2016 that will provide greater functionality to track expenditures at a programmatic level. Program expenditures will be used in conjunction with program performance measures and client clinical measures to analyze effectiveness and efficiency of services.

- R2. Marin County Board of Supervisors and Mental Health and Substance Use Services immediately add more crucial housing for the mentally ill, including using the \$1.4M MHSA funds awarded over six years ago for this purpose.**

Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

The County will complete the required planning process and request transfer of the remaining \$1.4 million from Cal/HFA to MHSUS to be used for housing. The proposed budget for next year increases spending for mental health programs by over \$10 million, including \$2 million for residential placements. The County is currently providing housing for over 400 clients served by MHSUS. Housing beyond current commitment levels and the additional capacity supported by the referenced \$1.4 million in MHSA housing funds will be subject to identification of financial resources. Medi-Cal funds cannot be utilized for housing.

- R3. Marin County Board of Supervisors and Mental Health and Substance Use Services find a replacement location for the Helen Vine Detox Center before the current lease expires in 2016.**

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented but will be in the future.

Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Buckelew Foundation, is in the process of securing a new location for the Helen Vine facility within a time frame that avoids a disruption of services. The County has set aside \$1 million for the new facility.