



HUMBOLDT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

WILLIAM F. HONSAL, SHERIFF/CORONER

-TOGU 6/25/20

MAIN STATION

CIVIL/COURTS
(707) 445-7335

826 FOURTH STREET • EUREKA CA 95501-0516
PHONE (707) 445-7251 • FAX (707) 445-7298

CUSTODY SERVICES
(707) 441-5159

June 19, 2020

Honorable Joyce Hinrichs, Presiding Judge
Humboldt County Superior Court
825 5th Street
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: Grand Jury Report: Jails and Facilities

Dear Honorable Joyce Hinrichs,

Attached is my response to the Grand Jury report on Jails and facilities. We are continuously looking for ways to address the mental health treatment in the correctional facility. The Sheriff's office and DHHS staff assigned to the mental health services at the jail are always looking for ways to improve our processes and services to the community. I believe we are making decisions and taking steps in the right direction. I appreciate the Grand Jury's report, findings and recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. F. Honsal".

Sheriff, County of Humboldt
707.268.3618

2020 RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Jails and Facilities

Report Date: 06/16/2020

Response by: W. Honsal, Sheriff, County of Humboldt

FINDINGS

1. The Sheriff agrees with the findings numbered: F1-F3

RECOMMENDATIONS R1-3

1. Recommendations numbered R1 has not been implemented, however, we are considering implementation in the near future. R2 has been implemented. R3 will be implemented by August 2020.

Date: 6/19/2020

Signed: 

Number of pages attached: 2

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT – RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSE SUMMARY STATEMENT

Recommendations

R1 The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Sheriff's Department use outside, for-profit contractors to fill vacant staff positions for mental health services only when exhaustive efforts of recruitment have failed. Such contracts should be well-scrutinized to assure quality, cost-effectiveness, adequate oversight, and accountability, effective October 1, 2020.

Response

Even though our Correctional Facility Mental Health has been understaffed for years, the personnel that are currently assigned have done an outstanding job with meeting the needs of the facility. I do recognize that this pace cannot last forever, and things need to be changed. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Correctional Facility is currently under contract with the Wellpath corporation to provide medical care. This medical contract expires on September of 2021. County Mental Health has been attempting to fill Mental Health positions in both the correctional facility and in the county clinics. We have been unable to recruit and retain quality personnel for these key positions. I agree that the County needs to address this concern as soon as possible. I am recommending that when the medical contract for the Correctional Facility expires, the County advertise a competitive bidding process for both Medical and MH Services for the Humboldt County Correctional Facility. A private company can ensure that both medical and the mental health needs of our inmates are addressed, and that continuity of care exists within the facility. I am recommending that the RFP clearly requires the awarded company to ensure that the quality of MH care as well as the requirement for sufficient staffing is prioritized at all times.

Recommendations

R2 The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Humboldt County Human Resources Department and Department of Health and Human Services thoroughly examine and improve their effectiveness in hiring, onboarding, and recruitment processes to better fill vacancies. These changes should be implemented by January 1, 2021.

Response

The Department of Health and Human Services have actively begun this process by making the recruiting specific to the Humboldt County Correctional Facility in hopes of attracting potential employees who are prepared to do clinical work in a correctional environment. Continued

conversations exist between Department of Health and Human Services, Human Resources, and the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office on ways to better improve recruitment and retention. These lines of communication between county departments is wide open. We all are working together to ensure all issues are being addressed.

Recommendations

The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Sheriff's Department proceed with implementation of a State approved Competency Restoration Program in coordination with Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services, effective January 1, 2021.

Response

Inmates languishing in county jails that have been declared incompetent to stand trial has been an issue throughout the state for years. I am happy to report that Humboldt County Correctional Facility has been one of the counties that has been selected by the California Department State Hospitals (CDSH) to have a Jail Based Competency Treatment Program (JBCT). The Sheriff's office has newly entered into a contract with the CDSH that was approved by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to operate a JBCT at the facility. The contract with our current medical provider Wellpath, will be providing the MH services for the program. This program is set to be approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 23, 2020. The targeted start date for accepting the first patient into the program is August 1, 2020. This will allow up to 6 male or female inmates with mental health issues to receive necessary court ordered restoration treatment locally rather than waiting several months for a bed to open at a State Hospital. This will improve the quality of MH treatment they receive as well as allow the cases to proceed through the judicial system at a more efficient pace.