



Sonoma County Sheriff's Department

#1875

*BILL COGBILL
Sheriff-Coroner*

*Rec
8/30/04
CJS*

*GARY A. ZANOLINI
Assistant Sheriff
Law Enforcement Division*

*MICHAEL M. COSTA
Assistant Sheriff
Detention Division*

August 26, 2004

SEP 14 REC'D

The Honorable Allan Hardcastle
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Sonoma
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

GRAND JURY

Dear Judge Hardcastle:

Attached please find the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department response to the 2003-2004 Grand Jury Report.

Sincerely,

BILL COGBILL
Sheriff-Coroner

BC/mb

F:\Grand Jury\2004\Ltr-Response.doc

cc w/Attachments: Board of Supervisors
Court Executive Officer
County Administrator
County Clerk

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2796 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
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Facing Up To Changes in the Jails

FINDINGS-- Page 48- 50

F1 – The standards of professionalism and ability among the Sergeants and Correctional Officers in the jails are very high, not only their level of training, but pride in their jobs, their knowledge, understanding, dedication, and their concern for the welfare of the inmates.

RESPONSE:

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F5 – At this point in mid-2004 both jails are now in danger of being seriously overcrowded. Total capacity in both jails is 1,286 beds, with 85% of that (1,093 beds) considered optimum. The inmate census for both jails over the 10-month period July 1, 2003-April 30, 2004 was 1,079 although this is probably on the conservative side since ADP is reported on a midnight census, and the population can fluctuate during the day and exceed this number. Therefore, as overcrowding develops steps will have to be taken to relieve the pressure, and this has been done by the early release of selected inmates before completion of their sentences for specific non-violent offenses, or by the Supervised Release on Own Recognizance program (S.O.R.) or by house arrest and electronic monitoring.

RESPONSE:

The respondent agrees with the finding.

F6 – Increased security at the minimum-to-medium security NCDF is an area of concern. As increasing numbers of unsentenced inmates are housed there instead of the MADF, additional pressure will be applied. The latter is a different kind of inmate for which the NCDF was not designed, and for which it is not suited. The sentenced inmates normally housed there have little incentive to walk away or cause trouble, since their sentences are finite and release is in sight. The unsentenced inmates tend to have a different mind-set, and as a result the supervision must be more intense.

RESPONSE:

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Facing Up To Changes in the Jails (Cont'd)

RECOMMENDATION, Page 50 (R1)

A solution must be found to address the cycle of recidivism of the mentally ill. The long-term view must involve diverting them from a continuing process of re-arrest and detention, and into programs of supervised and responsible independent living. A system of procedures should be set up to monitor them when they have been stabilized in the jail, and linked to a mechanism for guidance and follow-through when they are released back into the community.

RESPONSE:

The recommendation requires further analysis.

We concur that a solution to the “revolving door” of mentally ill offenders must be found. As your report reflects, the F.A.C.T. program was highly successful in reducing recidivism. Unfortunately, funding for F.A.C.T. and other resources available to the mentally ill have either been eliminated or severely reduced.

The Sheriff's Department currently meets all mandates concerning discharge planning for mentally ill offenders but will continue to explore new opportunities to serve this inmate population. This issue is not solely a Sheriff's Department issue – it is a criminal justice system issue requiring collaboration with all criminal justice stakeholders and the mental health community.

The Treatment and Alternative Programs Sub-Committee of the Sheriff's Jail Oversight Committee has been exploring solutions to this issue. This committee's membership includes representatives from: Alcohol and Other Drug Services; Courts; District Attorney; Mental Health; Public Defender; and the Sheriff's Department.

This committee made a recommendation to the Criminal Justice Council on July 28, 2004 to address this issue. That recommendation will be taken forward to the County Administrator's Office for consideration as funding becomes available.

Facing Up To Changes in the Jails (Cont'd)

RECOMMENDATION, Page 50 (R2)

Serious thought should be given to building a separate detention facility for the mentally ill, tailored to their needs. The grand jury recommends that this be established as a priority before an expansion to the MADF, since this is likely to be an important part of the solution to the overcrowding problem.

RESPONSE:

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

Construction of a separate detention facility would not be cost effective. However, the jail planning committee recognizes this special housing need as its top priority with the expansion of the Main Adult Detention Facility.

Although we are just entering into the conceptual design phase of construction, a great deal of discussion has already taken place concerning medical-mental health housing needs. In addition to the overall projected capacity, we have discussed the need for an efficient work environment that also provides increased inmate opportunity to “out-of-cell” time and “outdoor recreation” to assist in their stabilization and treatment.