



COUNTY of SONOMA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Mark Walsh, ISD

Rita Scardaci, MPH – Director
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August 14, 2006

The Honorable Robert Boyd, Presiding Judge
Sonoma County Superior Court
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, California

RE: Response to the 2005-2006 Sonoma County Grand Jury Report

Dear Honorable Judge Boyd:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above stated Grand Jury Report. Following are the responses for the Department of Health Services, Human Services Department and Information Services Department to the Report titled "Through the Healthcare Looking Glass."

THROUGH THE HEALTHCARE LOOKING GLASS

Required responses to recommendations

- R2 The grand jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors develop written critical pathway system concerning healthcare access in Sonoma County. (Page 59)

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be partially implemented in the future. The Department of Health Services will develop a written critical pathway to assist health care providers, advocates and

members of the community access existing health resources available to low-income and medically indigent residents of Sonoma County. The Department will complete this project on or before July 1, 2007. The pathway will be available on the Department's website and in written form.

- R4 The grand jury recommends that the Public Health Department and the Board of Supervisors work to develop a central information center for consumers. (Page 59)

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Public Health Division of the County Department of Health Services will work with the Human Services Department and community partners to develop a central information phone line and internet link

that will provide consumers with access to health care information and resources, particularly for low-income and uninsured residents of Sonoma County. The health care information and resource center will be available on or before July 1, 2007.

- R5 The grand jury recommends that Information Services Department create an Internet link on the official Sonoma County website to give general information about CMSP and the clinics that will accept this program. (Page 59)

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Information Systems Department will create the recommended Internet link on the official Sonoma County website, www.sonoma-county.org. The Department of Health Services and the Human Services Department will provide content that is referenced by the link. The link will be added to the Sonoma County website on or before January 1, 2007.

- R6 The grand jury recommends that Human Services and the Board of Supervisors research alternatives to current CMSP that will be more accessible to consumers and cost-effective to taxpayers. (Page 59)

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented. Currently, CMSP provides the most effective balance between accessible health care services and cost-effective care for the indigent population of Sonoma County. CMSP is accepted at every hospital and clinic in Sonoma County, and pays for most specialty care. A CMSP participant is eligible for emergency care anywhere in the state of California, and will qualify for services provided by a CMSP member physician in any of the thirty-four consortium counties. Under county-based medically indigent programs, access to care is more restricted in that a participant can only receive services within the county, often only at designated hospitals or clinics.

Currently, CMSP is the most cost-effective way for Sonoma County to deliver needed medical services to indigent adults. Because of the use of State-provided realignment funding by the CMSP consortium, Sonoma County's share of CMSP costs is currently 40% of the total. If the county were to fund a county-based program, it would need to increase county costs by 40%-100% of the total, or reduce services to operate within reduced funding.

In 2006, San Luis Obispo and Santa Cruz counties began to explore the possibility of joining the consortium because CMSP provides more comprehensive services and better cost containment than their county-based programs.

Like any medical coverage program, CMSP faces many challenges in today's environment (e.g., recruiting medical specialists, the rising cost of care). At the consortium level, CMSP works closely with Blue Cross Life and Health to address challenges faced by the program. At the county level, the DHS and HSD

will create a work group to find ways to encourage the CMSP population to use more preventive and health maintenance services. In addition, to ensure the County's interests are appropriately addressed, Bob Deis, Sonoma County Administrator, is a member of the CMSP Governing Board and Rita Scardaci, Director of Health Services, is a member of the CMSP Planning and Benefits Committee.

Please contact us if there is any other information we can provide.

Sincerely,



for Rita Scardaci, Director
Department of Health Services



Dianne M. Edwards, Director
Department of Human Services



Mark Walsh, Director
Information Services Department

cc: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Denise Gordon, Sonoma County Court Executive Officer
Bob Deis, Sonoma County Administrator
Eeve Lewis, Sonoma County Clerk