

AUG 31 2010



Human Services Department
COUNTY OF SONOMA



GRAND JURY

August 29, 2010

SEP 10 2010

RECEIVED

Gary Nadler
Presiding Judge
Superior Court, State of California
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Response to the 2009-2010 Grand Jury Final Report
A Look at the Public Guardian (pages 30-31)
County of Sonoma, Human Services Department

Dear Judge Nadler,

Please accept this response to the recommendations by the 2009-2010 Grand Jury regarding the Public Guardian.

Findings (page 31)

I accept the four findings of the Grand Jury regarding the Public Guardian.

Recommendation 1 (page 31): The Public Guardian's Office must continue to pursue its recently revised standard of accountability to the public and provide increased public exposure to its role in assisting citizens who cannot help themselves.

This recommendation has been and will continue to be implemented. As noted by the Grand Jury, the Public Guardian's Office has recently and thoroughly reviewed and revised its policies, procedures and operations manual. These newly revised documents emphasize increased accountability to the community and to the probate court. They also reflect the state mandate to ensure the safety, dignity, respect and confidentiality of every person being served. All Public Guardian employees were involved with this revision process and are fully committed to providing services in a manner that meets the state mandate, the revised policies, and the Grand Jury's expectation for accountability and exposure.

Recommendation 2 (page 31): The Public Guardian should create an outreach program, including efforts to inform vulnerable populations, especially seniors, about options for assigning alternate agents to step in when necessary.

This recommendation has been and will continue to be implemented. The Public Guardian's Office provides services to county residents who do not have the resources to meet their own needs. As acknowledged in this Grand Jury recommendation, it is important to educate this vulnerable population about the resources available to them. The Public Guardian's Office is committed to continually exploring opportunities to educate the community about its services and will work with partner organizations to expand the reach of the current outreach activities.

APPROVED
~~READ AND CONSIDERED~~

DATE 9/8/10 BY MW

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The Honorable Judge Nadler
August 29, 2010
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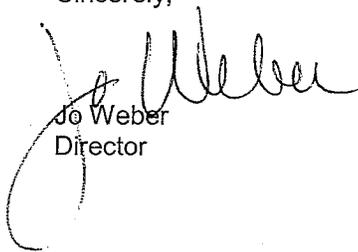
The Public Guardian currently conducts the following outreach activities:

- Public Guardian services are explained in the Senior Resource Guide which is published annually by the Human Services Department. Each year 25,000 copies of the Senior Resource Guide are distributed in English and Spanish at senior centers, community events, libraries, physician's offices, and elsewhere. The Guide is also posted on the websites of the Human Services Department (and the Area Agency on Aging (www.socoaaa.org)).
- The Human Services Department website (<http://www.sonoma-county.org/human/index.htm>) includes "Tips for Protecting Your Finances and Medical Decisions" which outlines actions that people may take to ensure that their wishes and intentions are clearly stated. This website also includes frequently asked questions about the Public Guardian.
- Information about the Public Guardian's office is discussed at trainings for individuals who are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults. In 2009, the Human Services Department trained over 250 individuals including social workers, nurses, clergy, law enforcement and community volunteers.

Over the past year, I have personally been involved in the review and redesign of the Public Guardian services. This program is a critical safety net for some of the most vulnerable adults in our community. I am committed to providing the best possible services to our clients and to keeping the public trust through the ethical and transparent implementation of our mandate.

If you have questions or need additional information, please do hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jo Weber
Director