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September 19, 2006

TO: The Honorable Robert Boyd
Presiding Judge, Sonoma County Superior Court

FROM: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: **Response to Final Report of the 2005-2006 Grand Jury**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
RESPONSE TO THE 2005-2006 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

This Land is Your Land

Recommendations: Page 12

RI. The Board of Supervisors should consider merging the Open Space Authority into the district. It served a purpose in getting voter approval of the sales tax in 1990, but that purpose no longer exists. From a purely financial standpoint the County Treasurer and Tax Collector could easily take over the role now performed by the authority. The only reason to perpetuate the authority would be for its function as an oversight agency approving the work of the district.

RESPONSE: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future, no later than March 31, 2011.

The Open Space Authority cannot currently be merged with the district because they are legally separate entities. A current contract between the District Board of Directors and the Open Space Authority shall remain in effect, subject to any amendments, until March 31, 2011 when the voter-approved sales tax sunsets.

On July 18, 2006, the Board of Supervisors approved an Ordinance to be placed on the November 6, 2006 ballot to extend the current sales tax for open space until March 31, 2031. The Ordinance states that prior to April 1, 2011, the District and the County shall enter into a contract for the administration of the 2006 Expenditure Plan, including specified fiscal oversight by the Open Space Authority. The specific responsibilities of the Authority will be addressed at that time.

R2. *The Board of Supervisors should consider restructuring the Citizens' Advisory Committee to give it greater responsibility for overseeing the work of the district. If this were done, the committee could assume the role now given to the authority. To do this it would probably be necessary to reduce the size of the committee to make it more workable.*

RESPONSE: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted at this time.

The role of the Advisory Committee is to provide policy guidance to the Board of Directors and General Manager regarding the District's Open Space Program. The Open Space Authority provides valuable fiscal oversight related to the District's expenditures and acquisitions. The role of the Open Space Authority will change when its current contract with the Board of Directors expires on March 31, 2011. The Advisory Committee is to be additionally tasked with assisting staff and the Board to implement the District's new Acquisition Plan and to assist in establishing an improved framework for prioritizing expenditures for land protection projects. While the current size of the Advisory Committee is large (17 members), it allows for representation of a broad and diverse public in Sonoma County. It is also able to work effectively through subcommittees and working groups.

R3. *If the Open Space Authority is retained, there should be a two-term limit imposed on board members. Eight years is long enough for one individual to serve in this capacity.*

RESPONSE: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted at this time.

The role of the Open Space Authority will change prior to April 1, 2011 to reflect changes to Section 7285.5 of the Revenue and Taxation Code. The Open Space Authority members currently serve two-year terms that can be renewed by the Board of Supervisors. There are no limits on the number of terms that can be served. Until the Board enters into a new contract with the Open Space District for specified fiscal oversight by the Authority, there is value in retaining Open Space Authority members because of their familiarity with the District's finances and appraisal procedures.

Shaping the County's Future

Findings: Page 29-31

F3. *The General Plan is viewed more as a policy document, a guideline, for the Elements covered by it. There are few, if any, measurable goals or standards. An evaluation of the General Plan performance is, therefore, more subjective than based on tangible data.*

RESPONSE: Partially disagree with this finding.

Some GP goals are measurable and others are not. For example, the Circulation and Transit Element contains Level of Service goals for county roads that can be tracked over time. However, most goals are subjective. The General Plan also contains a program for periodic reporting of indicators (i.e. traffic, agriculture, population, housing, air quality, etc.) as a way of measuring success (somewhat like what is done at the Economic Development Board) including both measurable and unmeasurable factors.

F5. The logic and phasing of the update process follow a sensible path and incorporate all possible resources at the disposal of the County. Especially the use of a Citizens' Advisory Committee to solicit public input is commendable.

RESPONSE: Agree with this finding.

F6. Timelines and Milestones are reasonable and generally met. Since timing is well beyond the General Plan 1989 expiration, and finalization of General Plan 2020 will not happen before the end of 2006, the update process and time schedule should be reviewed.

RESPONSE: Partially disagree with this finding.

While it is true that the General Plan 2020 is behind schedule, the schedule has been periodically reviewed and updated by decision makers (through the Board of Supervisors *ad hoc* subcommittee) and staff as the process has unfolded. The 1989 General Plan remains in effect and did not "expire." While a General Plan typically uses a 20-year forecast of growth, the policies and programs remain in effect until modified and changed.

F8. About 35,000 property owners potentially affected by changes in the General Plan 2020 were invited to a public hearing on the Draft EIR. The notice did not identify why a property could be affected, causing an overflow crowd to show up for the hearing at a venue with limited occupancy. Many citizens were turned away, prompting a very negative reaction in the press. (See Sonoma West Times and News, Volume 117, No.20).

RESPONSE: Partially disagree with this finding.

The notice invited property owners and many other interested citizens to attend any or all of three public meetings: a hearing on the Draft EIR, a workshop on the Draft General Plan, and the Planning Commission hearing on the Draft General Plan. Although the notice did not say how each property was specifically affected, it did identify several ways that properties *could* be affected and contact information was provided so that citizens could obtain information specific to their property. The crowd at the first hearing was larger than anticipated and some could not be accommodated. The hearing was extended so that those people could attend at a later date. Since the first hearing, all of the meeting venues have been large enough to accommodate everyone who attended.

F9. Sonoma County has failed to meet mandated housing requirements since 1992. Repeated attempts to satisfy State requirements were not successful, resulting in a zoning moratorium. The County anticipates succeeding in meeting State Housing mandates with General Plan 2020.

RESPONSE: Disagree with this finding.

As noted in the Grand Jury Report, Sonoma County's 1992 Housing Element was successfully challenged in court. As a result, in 2000 a temporary moratorium was imposed on certain non-residential zoning changes. However, the County adopted a new Housing Element in 2002 and the zoning moratorium was lifted shortly thereafter. The state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) certified the County's Housing Element in 2002 and the Element has been and remains in compliance with state housing element law since that time. The 2002 Housing Element is now being successfully implemented, including the June 2005 adoption of major zoning code changes that increased opportunities for housing, removed constraints and provided incentives for the production of affordable units. Other Housing Element implementation programs are being carried out as part of General Plan 2020. However, contrary to a statement in the Grand Jury Report, the County is not engaged in a "full-scale update of the Housing Element."

F10. Land Use policies for County land bordering property in a City's area of influence occasionally create controversy. Every effort is made by both authorities to minimize undue inconvenience to the property owner. There is no formal approach to address these issues.

RESPONSE: Partially disagree with this finding.

Land Use issues between cities and the County have only been controversial in a few locations, primarily in South Santa Rosa. In that area, there are both informal and formal procedures to address these issues, the latter including a joint City/County Design Review Committee for development projects, formal agreements regarding provision of sewer and water services and periodic updates of land use policies. The County is addressing some of these conflicts in GP 2020 by amending the General Plan Land Use to be consistent with the City's. In the end, the best way to address this issue is by the City annexing the affected land.

F11. Resolution of General Plan conflicts in adjacent jurisdictions is handled on a case-by-case basis and is usually resolved successfully. There is no formal approach to address these issues.

RESPONSE: Agree with this finding. See also Response F10.

F12. The 15 members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee are serving as volunteers without compensation or mileage reimbursement. In the case of the CAC 2020, members served for almost 70 months and conducted/attended over 40 meetings in different locations.

RESPONSE: Agree with this finding.

F13. From the documents reviewed, the General Plan update process was officially launched in the fall of 2001. The General Plan 2020 will not be ready for review by the Board of Supervisors before the end of 2006, two years after the expiration of General Plan 1989.

RESPONSE: Partially disagree with this finding.

As noted above, the General Plan does not “expire” until and unless it is amended to reflect the update. Five years for adoption of a new general plan is fairly typical in areas that include diverse interests and an extensive public participation process.

F14. The review process by the Citizen’s Advisory Committee was expected to take about one year, but lasted almost five years.

RESPONSE: Agree with this finding.

F15. Staff informed the grand jury that there is no documented “road map” for the General Plan Update process. Staff is familiar with what needs to be done and proceeds accordingly.

RESPONSE: Agree with this finding.

Staff is familiar with the process and provided periodic updates of the process and schedule to the public, the CAC, and the Planning Commission. As typically happens in this type of planning program, the process and schedule evolved over time in response to the needs of the hearing bodies and the public. While there isn’t one document that contains the entire process from beginning to end, updated process and schedule information is made available on a regular basis on the website and in hard copy form, including a time line for the Planning Commission portion of the Update that is presently in progress. In addition, the Board of Supervisors established an *ad hoc* subcommittee that has met regularly with staff, the chairs of the CAC and the Planning Commission chair to review the process and schedule.

F16. State mandate requires that the Housing Element status be reported on annually. A similar, periodic General Plan implementation status report to the Board of Supervisors and the public is not prepared.

RESPONSE: Partially disagree with this finding.

he Annual Report that is prepared on the status of the Housing Element includes the status of the General Plan. This is a reporting method that is allowed by State law because the General Plan is in the process of being updated. Once the General Plan Update is complete, more detailed annual reporting on the General Plan will be provided. In addition, an annual report on all of the County’s comprehensive planning programs, including General Plan programs, is provided to the Board of Supervisors.

F17. The active involvement and General Plan oversight function by members of the Board of Supervisors appears to be rather limited, dealing mostly with manpower and budget issues. The planning staffs address implementation and fulfillment issues.

RESPONSE: Disagree with this finding.

The Board of Supervisors has been substantively involved in the General Plan Update by considering and setting the scope of issues and work plan at the beginning of the update process. The Board also approved a budget and consultant contracts for the Update. Since that time staff has met regularly with the Board *ad hoc* subcommittee to receive guidance on the overall review process, in addition to discussion of manpower and budgetary issues. Given the review process directed by the Board—review and recommendation from the CAC followed by review and recommendation by the Planning Commission—the Board would not be expected to be involved in policy decisions on the General Plan update until the Planning Commission has completed its hearings and deliberations and forwarded its recommendation to the Board.

Recommendations: Page 32

R1. Formalize and document the Sonoma County General Plan update process in an electronic or hard copy document or flow-chart, with easy access by the public.

RESPONSE: The recommendation has already been partially implemented and will be fully implemented by December 2006.

The process for Planning Commission review of the General Plan has been completed in both electronic and hard copy form and is currently available on the County website and in hard copy staff reports. The preliminary process for the subsequent Board of Supervisors review of the Update will be added to the website and in hard copy format by the end of the calendar year. Once the Planning Commission is ready to make its final recommendations on the update, the process for the Board's review will be finalized under the direction of the Chair of the Board and then made available on the website and in hard copy format.

R2. Create a link on the Sonoma County Home Page that leads the visitor directly to the General Plan site, avoiding the need to navigate through the PRMD home page.

RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented by adding a General Plan Update link in the "Find it Fast" menu on the Sonoma County Internet Home Page.

R3. Adopt the General Plan implementation tracking mechanism approved by the Citizen's Advisory Committee in their August 19, 2004 meeting.

RESPONSE: The recommendation requires further analysis.

PRMD presently tracks progress on implementing General Plan programs and provides periodic reports to the Board of Supervisors. The Citizen Advisory Committee's recommended implementation tracking mechanism will be considered by the Planning Commission in the fall of 2006. The Planning Commission's recommendation will be presented to the Board of Supervisors with the rest of the General Plan Update. At that time, the Board of Supervisors will consider its adoption. The final decision on the General Plan Update and the tracking mechanism is not anticipated to be made until some time in 2007. If the Board adopts and approves a new tracking system, PRMD will implement it accordingly.

R4. *Negotiate with affected Cities and Municipalities to establish and implement a formal process to coordinate mutually relevant issues such as traffic, zoning of adjacent properties, etc.*

RESPONSE: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

Formal processes are already in place to address many mutually relevant issues between and among the County and Cities. For example, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority is a countywide agency that deals with transportation issues and funding. The authority is comprised of elected representatives of the County and all of the Cities and is responsible for preparing and adopting the Countywide Transportation Plan. In addition, as mentioned in the response to Finding F10, there is already a formal City/County Design Review process and detailed sewer and water service agreements in place between the County and City of Santa Rosa, where most inter-jurisdictional issues arise. The County also has a formal project referral and comment process in place for projects within the Spheres of Influence of the other cities and special districts. A more comprehensive formal process is not justified at this time due to the infrequency of problems that arise and the fact that problems that do arise can be addressed in a mutually agreeable manner on a case-by-case basis.

R5. *Include a mileage consideration for all General Plan-related Committee members in future General Plan-related budget requests.*

RESPONSE: The recommendation will be implemented through consideration of a mileage reimbursement for any General Plan-related citizen committees that may be appointed in the future.

R6. *Develop and implement a periodic General Plan Update report for review by the Board of Supervisors.*

RESPONSE: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

The existing mechanism (*ad hoc* Board subcommittee) utilized by the Board of Supervisors to track progress on the General Plan update process has been sufficient to provide the Board with the necessary information about the status of the Plan. The *ad hoc* committee can request that a more formal report to the full Board be provided at any time. In addition, the Board is scheduled to receive the Planning Commission recommended Plan in early 2007, removing the necessity of having a progress report.

R7. *Improve public notices about meetings on the General Plan to specifically state the topic and only invite affected property owners to avoid overcrowding.*

RESPONSE: A portion of this recommendation has been implemented but full implementation is not reasonable.

Public notices have been improved to better reflect the specific topic being discussed. However, it is neither appropriate nor legal to limit notices only to affected property owners. Many participants in the General Plan Update are renters, public agency members, elected officials, and the general public. Almost everyone who lives in the County, its cities, and neighboring counties may be affected by the General Plan. In addition, State law requires that the County provide notice to anyone who requests it.

R8. Evaluate pre-meeting feedback to hearing notices (e-mails, phone calls, personal visits) and provide meeting facilities to safely accommodate participants.

RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented.

PRMD routinely evaluates pre-meeting feedback and estimates the size of a crowd that will likely attend a public hearing, and arranges for an appropriately sized venue. In the case of the one hearing at issue, PRMD underestimated the size of the crowd. It is very difficult to change the meeting venue after the notice goes out, since the notice itself must contain the location of the meeting. Subsequent hearings on the General Plan have been held in larger facilities.

The Million Dollar Inmate

Recommendations: Page 44-45

R11. Develop a method for determining the actual cost of the medical program to the County.

RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented.

As indicated in the Sheriff, CAO and Risk Management joint response, costs components of inmate's medical care already exist in various budget units. The Sheriff Department's Fiscal Unit has committed to develop a procedure that will compile all inmate medical costs on a quarterly basis.

R12. Require expense-based information to be used to determine whether the contract price is commensurate with the cost of services rendered.

RESPONSE: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The Sheriff will submit to the medical services provider, California Forensic Medical Group a request to provide quarterly information on expenses relative to the contract with the County. As indicated in the joint response, the request will be transmitted during the month of August 2006.

R17. Create a task force to examine the changing realities effecting health care in the county detention facilities.

RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented and has been in place since the inception of the contract with the medical service provider.

The Board of Supervisors understands that the functions provided by the attendees of the quarterly Quality Assurance Meeting are comparable to functions that would be addressed by a task force. During meetings, current medical practices are evaluated and discussed, concerns and issues are presented and new information is reviewed

As mentioned in the joint departmental response, several cost savings measures have been identified and implemented.

The Impacts of Yesterday's Promises

Recommendations: Page 49

RI. The grand jury recommends that Supervisors, Council members and financial officers should verify that health or other lifetime benefit promises are secured properly and in compliance with reserve funding standards.

RESPONSE: This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future, see the following for timing.

The Board has already begun working toward this goal. In October 2005, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors took a proactive action by approving a contract for actuarial services to calculate the liability associated with health insurance currently provided to Sonoma County retirees. In addition, the Board contracted for Actuarial Valuation of alternatives that may be considered in lieu of the current retirement health benefits. The results of this work were presented on August 15, 2006, in a public session and the Board gave staff direction to develop specific recommendations to address the situation.

As was mentioned in the Auditor-Controller's response: The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued statements No. 43 entitled "Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefit Plans Other than Pension Plans," and No. 45 entitled "Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefits Other than Pensions" in 2004. The former requires employers to actuarially determine the total liability of Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) and actuarially determine an annual required contribution towards the total cost of OPEB. The latter requires employers to either fund the actuarially determined annual required contribution towards the cost of the OPEB, or record the entire amount of the unfunded liability for the OPEB in the financial statements. The GASB statements do not mandate the pre-funding or reserves of OPEB liabilities, only how one accounts for those benefits. The County is required to implement GASB No. 43 by June 30, 2007 and GASB No. 45 by June 30, 2008.

While prefunding and reserves are not required by GASB, the County understands its responsibility to properly fund its future obligations and is in the process of developing a plan to do so.

The County of Sonoma has made a conscious decision to be proactive in its early efforts to address the requirements of GASB 43 and 45. The Board has completed the requirement for the actuarial valuation well in advance of the GASB requirements and the majority of California Counties. It is

the Board's intent to meet the challenges of and opportunities for retirement health benefits to address the requirements of GASB 43 and 45.

R2: *The grand jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors and/or City Councils enlist actuarial expertise to audit this asset/obligation disclosure.*

RESPONSE: This recommendation has already been implemented.

As noted above, in October 2005, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors took a proactive action by approving a contract for actuarial services to calculate the OPEB liability and the results of the Actuarial Valuation were reported to the Board of Supervisors on August 15, 2006.

In addition, the Board contracted for Actuarial Valuation of retirement health benefit alternatives that may be considered in lieu of the current retirement health benefits to enable the County to control and, if necessary due to funding constraints, reduce its future retirement health benefit obligation.

R3. *The grand jury recommends that the advice of an expert should be solicited to consider the fairest most equitable way to offer health care benefits to public employees. This should be disclosed.*

RESPONSE: This recommendation has already been implemented.

Currently, the County contracts with Towers Perrin, LLC for expert advice regarding its employee health care benefits. This service reviews and makes recommendations regarding health care benefits for both current and retired County employees. Ultimately, some of the changes will require negotiations with employee groups.

Currently, the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) includes disclosure of other employee benefits costs/liability such as retirement, sick/vacation and insurances. With the implementation of GASB 43, the CAFR will include the disclosure of the retirement health benefit obligation and annual required obligation.

R4. *The grand jury recommends to build a secure structure for the maintenance of employee benefits should not be deferred.*

RESPONSE: This recommendation has been implemented and will continue implementation into the future, beginning with public meetings in August 2006.

The County is already providing health care benefits for retirees and therefore the structure for the maintenance of those benefits is already in place. The Board can only assume that the Grand Jury's recommendation was intended to focus on the appropriate future funding for those benefits. Current retirement health care benefits and alternatives for retiree health benefits, funding ability, and reserve structure were discussed in August 2006 and County staff has been given direction to bring back specific recommendations for further consideration in future Board meetings.

R5. The grand jury recommends full disclosure of each entities total benefit obligation along with information describing provisions to secure them. We are requesting this information between the end of each entities current fiscal year and December 31, 2006:

- **Number of employees eligible for pension premiums**
- **Number of retired employees receiving pension benefits**
- **Financial obligation**
- **What reserves are in place to insure these pension obligations**
- **Obligation for health care coverage**
- **Reserve amount in place**
- **Amount required by federal authorities to secure these health care benefits.”**

RESPONSE: This recommendation, with one exception, has already been implemented.

As noted by the Auditor-Controller, the County issues its CAFR prior to December 31 each year and the report will comply with the reporting requirements of GASB 43 & 45 in order to ensure the proper financial reporting/disclosure. In addition, the GASB statements require periodical actuarial valuations of the obligation and funding of retirement health benefits. The Board will contract for those actuarial valuations to comply with the requirement of the GASB statements and for proper financial reporting.

The reporting/disclosure requirements for GASB 43 and 45 will be similar to the reporting/disclosure requirements for employee retirement benefits. It is the Board’s understanding that the new GASB reporting/disclosure requirements for retirement health benefits in combination with the actuarial valuation reports will meet all of the grand jury’s requested information, except for the “Amount required by federal authorities to secure these health care benefits.” The Board is not aware of any federally required amount of funding for health care benefits, however, it is the County’s practice to comply with Federal and State program and funding requirements.

Through the Healthcare Looking Glass

Recommendations: Page 59

R1. The grand jury recommends that within the next year, the Board of Supervisors organize a healthcare symposium with stakeholders to discuss approaches to healthcare issues in Sonoma County. The grand jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors attempt to coordinate with Sonoma State University on such a symposium.

RESPONSE: This recommendation will not be implemented.

In 2001 a group of major healthcare stakeholders, led by the Sonoma County Medical Association, convened two community-wide “Healthcare Summits,” to discuss the status of the local healthcare delivery system and to develop strategies to address critical issues within the system. Sonoma County was a lead sponsor and participant in the planning and implementation of the summits. Sonoma State faculty also participated.

It was the consensus of participants that goals could best be achieved by forming issue specific task groups to focus on strategic initiatives, under the direction of a Healthcare Alliance Coordinating Committee. Task groups have since pursued projects in policy advocacy for enhanced federal reimbursement, access to care for the uninsured, healthcare workforce shortages, information technology and several other areas.

The Healthcare Alliance and many of the task group initiatives continue today (i.e. the Children's Health Initiative, the Healthcare Workforce Development Roundtable, and the Senior Fall Prevention Project etc.). Rita Scardaci, DHS Department Head, currently chairs the Healthcare Alliance and the Department of Health Services provides staff support to several of its ongoing task groups. The Board will continue to support these projects and other collaborative efforts, such as Medi-Cal redesign, as the best approach to future healthcare planning.

R2. *The grand jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors develop written critical pathway system concerning healthcare issues in Sonoma County.*

RESPONSE: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be partially implemented in the future.

The Board has directed the Department of Health Services to 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 website and in written form.

R3. *The grand jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors create an independent interdisciplinary agency that oversees healthcare resources, coordinates communications, and problem-solves among healthcare providers to conserve resources in the county.*

RESPONSE: This recommendation will not be implemented.

The local healthcare delivery system is a highly complex, loosely organized structure of public and private organizations, funded by both public and private payors and regulated by market forces and state and federal policy. Recognizing this complexity, the Board has chosen to play a leadership role in collaborative efforts to achieve focused, incremental improvements in the local delivery system.

As noted in the response to R1, the County currently provides leadership, through the Department of Health Services, to a number of collaborative planning activities to address specific healthcare access and delivery system capacity issues. These include: the California Medical Services Program (CMSP), the Medi-Cal Re-Design Process, the Sonoma County Children's Health Initiative, the Healthcare Workforce Development Roundtable and others.

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.*

RESPONSE: This recommendation will not be implemented.

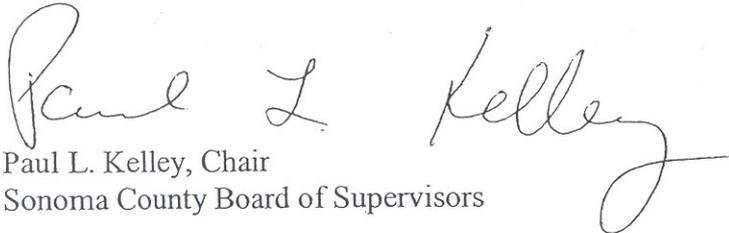
Currently, CMSP provides the most effective balance between accessible health care services and cost-effective care for the indigent population of Sonoma County. CMSP is accepted at every hospital and clinic in the Sonoma County, and pays for most specialty care. A CMSP participant is eligible for emergency 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.

Respectfully Submitted,


Paul L. Kelley, Chair
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

c: The Honorable Judge Allan Hardcastle
Eeve Lewis, County Clerk, County of Sonoma
Denise Gordon, Executive Officer of the Superior Court