



Behavioral Health Services

**Dennis P. Koch, Director
559-673-3508**

**209 E. 7th Street
Madera, CA 93638**

Board of Supervisors

BRETT FRAZIER
District 1

DAVID ROGERS
District 2

ROBERT POYTHRESS
District 3

MAX RODRIGUEZ
District 4

TOM WHEELER
District 5

June 27, 2018

Presiding Judge, Madera County Grand Jury
Madera, County Superior Court
200 S. G Street
Madera, CA 93637

Subject: Response to 2017-2018 Grand Jury Report entitled "Serving
Madera County At-Risk Children"

Honorable Presiding Judge:

In accordance with California Penal Code 933.5(a) and (b), this letter addresses the Findings and Recommendations related to the Department of Behavioral Health Services in the above-referenced Grand Jury report.

The following are the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations related to the Department of Behavioral Health, followed by the responses on the Director of Behavioral Health Services.

Finding 1:

Because of a lack of understanding of procedures for procuring the properly prepared releases, it is sometimes difficult for DSS to obtain needed client information from BHS.

Response

Respondent agrees with finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (1). The process for releasing private health information to include mental health records is dictated by both State and Federal law. DSS may experience challenges getting the required signatures from family members or clients on the release forms. Without signed release forms BHS cannot release the private health information.

Finding 2:

When the Healthy Beginnings Program is no longer funded, children under five will be adversely affected.

Response

Respondent disagrees with finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (2).

Behavioral Health Services will back fill the funding cuts that would have been received from First Five, therefore there will be no changes to the services these children are receiving from BHS.

Finding 3: There is a lack of understanding among BHS clinicians regarding the upcoming changes in the Healthy Beginnings Program.

Response

Respondent disagrees partially with finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (2).

Behavioral Health Services will back fill the funding cuts that would have been received from First Five, therefore there will be no changes to the services these children are receiving from BHS. The clinicians interviewed may not understand the funding changes.

Finding 4:

Because the Presumptive Transfer Program is new and BHS and DSS don't always agree on placement/treatment, children are adversely affected.

Response

Respondent disagrees partially with finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (2).

While DSS and BHS don't always agree on placement and treatment as each agency has different responsibilities, the team always has the child's best interest in mind. Therefore, the team work through their differences and come to a mutually agreed upon approach.

Finding 10:

Because BHS and DSS have different operational objectives and methods, there can be negative results for children.

Response

Respondent disagrees partially with finding per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) (2).

While DSS and BHS do have different operational objectives and methods the team always has the child's best interest in mind. Therefore, the team work through their differences and come to a mutually agreed upon approach.

Recommendation 1:

BHS management develop a plan to continue the services of the Healthy Beginnings Program by fall of 2018.

Response

Behavioral Health Services will back fill the funding cuts that would have been received from First Five, therefore there will be no changes to the services these children are receiving from BHS.

Recommendation 2:

BHS management meet weekly with clinicians to update and inform them of changes, particularly regarding the Health Beginnings Program, effective immediately.

Response

The recommendation has be implemented. BHS Clinical Supervisors meets weekly meetings with clinicians and other staff. A greater emphasis will be devoted to updates of program changes.

Recommendation 3:

BHS and DSS staff work together to resolve the issues resulting from AB1299 and the Presumptive Transfer Program on an ongoing basis, effective immediately.

Response

The recommendation has been partially implemented. At the beginning of the AB 1299 Program DSS and BHS had more frequent meetings. BHS agrees that more frequent meetings would be beneficial. BHS will work more closely with DSS to develop protocols and practices regarding AB 1299 (Presumptive Transfer Program) to ensure issues are resolved at an early stage.

I want to acknowledge the Grand Jury's review and time involved in this matter, and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendations

Sincerely,



Dennis P. Koch
Director, Madera County Behavioral Health Services

Cc: County Council
Board of Supervisors