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DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

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Reply To:
Fax:

February 18, 2010

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.
Director of Mental Health

SUBJECT: **REPORT ON IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AS A RESULT OF THE RELEASE OF INMATES FROM STATE PRISONS**

This memo will provide you with information regarding the impact on Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) services as a result of the release of inmates from State Prisons as requested during the February 2, 2010 meeting of your Board.

Overview of Impact of Changes in Status of Parolees

During the February 2, 2010 meeting of your Board, an outline was provided regarding three subgroups of individuals who are currently on parole or in State prison and whose change in status has the potential to affect service delivery in Los Angeles County. These groups, and their current impact on Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, are as follows:

Individuals Currently Residing in Los Angeles County Reclassified to Non-Revocable Parole Status

The first group is composed of individuals currently residing in Los Angeles County whose status will be reclassified to that of Non-Revocable Parole. The State of California has developed several measures in response to a federal court order to reduce the current State prison and parole population by 60,000 by the end of 2011. A provision that will reclassify the status of 7,700 parolees in Los Angeles County to that of Non-Revocable Parole was initiated on January 25, 2010 by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). This provision eliminates the supervision requirement as well as eligibility for services provided by the Parole Outpatient Clinic (POC) system for those on Non-Revocable Parole. It is estimated that 1,200 of these individuals will have received mental health care from POC or while in prison and will no longer be expected to report to POC.

Between January 1, 2010 and February 12, 2010, DMH outpatient facilities treated a number of individuals whose services were terminated by Parole Mental Health facilities as a result of the reclassification of their parole status. Until DMH receives identifying information regarding this group from CDCR, it is likely that this number will be significantly understated as it is based on the self-report of individuals who disclose the information when they initiate a request for services. Some individuals may be reluctant to report their involvement with CDCR; others may report additional referral sources (e.g., primary care) resulting in difficulties tracking the CDCR referrals. DMH continues to work with CDCR to obtain a full list of those in need of mental health services.

As of Friday, February 12, 2010 DMH directly operated clinics reported having seen 67 individuals believed to be on parole or referred by Parole Outpatient Clinics since January 1. As of February 16, outpatient service claims had been submitted through the DMH information system at a total cost of $34,707. Since claims submission lags behind service delivery, this figure can be expected to increase as programs enter data into our claiming system. An additional two individuals believed to be on parole were seen by Emergency Outreach Bureau (EOB) PMRT or SMART during this period. Episode data indicates that both individuals seen by the EOB teams were subsequently admitted to DHS psychiatric emergency rooms then inpatient units during this period. Six additional individuals were seen in inpatient settings; since costs are not generally claimed to those in inpatient units until the time of discharge, a total cost for these inpatient stays cannot yet be reported.

Incarcerated Individuals Slated for Early Release

The second group described in the February 2, 2010 meeting of your Board is composed of individuals currently in State prison who are slated for early release. This action has been stayed by court order and there is no current actual impact on the Department of Mental Health. Recent information provided by CDCR suggests that approximately 1,952 individuals currently incarcerated who are scheduled for release within the next six months will be placed on Non-Revocable Parole status and will, therefore, not receive outpatient parole mental health services once returned to Los Angeles County. The percentage that will require mental health services is yet to be determined. However, as previously reported, the potential impact on Los Angeles County, should this release occur, is estimated to be large.

Individuals in State Hospitals

The third group includes individuals who have been residing in State hospitals as incompetent to stand trial on felony charges, those who are not guilty by reason of insanity or mentally disordered offenders. In these cases the individuals have been referred for Lanterman-Petris-Short conservatorships and courts have determined that they will not extend their penal code commitments. Over the course of the past year, the State has been returning many of these individuals to their counties of origin – including Los Angeles County. Individuals in this group have severe mental health issues that required treatment in locked settings such as Institutes for Mental Diseases (IMDs) and State hospitals. Although the total number of individuals on criminal charges released from State hospitals may be small, the costs associated with their care are high. Since January 1, 2010 six individuals have been referred and converted to DMH State hospital beds.

Los Angeles County Workgroup

In order to identify and address the variety of issues stemming from the needs of individuals in State hospitals, a Los Angeles County workgroup has been formed. This workgroup is composed of representatives from the Office of the County Counsel, the Department of Mental Health Countywide Resource Management program, Office of the Public Guardian, and Justice Mental Health programs. The initial meeting of the workgroup will be held on February 26, 2010.

As requested, we will provide you with weekly cumulative reports regarding the number of individuals referred by CDCR and the total cost of their care so that your Board is fully informed of the impact of these changes on Los Angeles County. If you have any questions, or need further information, please contact me at (213) 738-4601 or Robin Kay, Ph.D., at (213) 738-4108.

MJS:RK:bjj

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Sheriff