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DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

<http://dmh.lacounty.gov>

550 SOUTH VERMONT AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90020

Reply To: (213) 738-4601
Fax: (213) 386-1297

April 27, 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 TREATED IN STATE HOSPITALS**

As requested by your Board during the meeting of February 20, 2010, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) has provided regular updates regarding the impact on services of the release of inmates from State Prisons. More specifically, DMH provided your Board with information on the impact of parolees whose status will be reclassified to Non-Revocable Parole by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). During the course of these updates, DMH differentiated these issues from those related to the status of inmates who reside and are treated in State hospitals. This memo will provide you with an update on the activities of the workgroup formed to focus on issues related to release of those in State hospitals.

Individuals in State Hospitals – Los Angeles County Workgroup

As previously reported, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health identified a group of individuals whose change in status has the potential to impact service delivery in Los Angeles County. This 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. Individuals in this group have severe mental health issues that required treatment in locked settings such as Institution 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.

On Friday, April 9, 2010, the Los Angeles County workgroup reconvened for a second meeting to review the transition of individuals from Superior Court to the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Participants from DMH, County Counsel, and Chief Executive Office reviewed an analysis of sixty individuals referred by the court system to the Office of the Public Guardian between March 2009 and March 2010.

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Several different groups of criminal case inmates were identified, and alternative approaches were identified. It was concluded that collaboration with the Court about the individual needs of clients as referrals are made is currently a successful approach; this course will be pursued and monitored on an ongoing basis. DMH will also explore options for engaging forensic experts that may assist with future evaluation and testimony should there be differences of opinion regarding clients' dispositions in the future.

The Los Angeles County workgroup will continue to meet on an as-needed basis to review the referrals and current approach. DMH will keep you informed of any developments related to release of inmates from State Hospitals and impact on service delivery. If you have any questions, or need further information, please contact me at (213) 738-4601, or your staff may contact Robin Kay, Ph.D., at (213) 738-4108.

MJS:RK:tld

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

Memo_MJS_CDCR