

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND SHEILA KUEHL

May 14, 2019

Expanding ODR’s Housing Program Countywide to Safely Divert More Individuals with Serious Clinical Needs

On August 11, 2015, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously voted to create the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) within the Department of Health Services (DHS) (“Expanding Effective Diversion Efforts in Los Angeles County,” Ridley-Thomas and Kuehl). At its core, ODR supports the diversion and reentry of individuals with serious mental health and/or substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system. With the help of community-based interventions, ODR removes inmates with serious clinical needs from the County jails and prevents individuals with serious clinical needs from entering the criminal justice system. To date, ODR’s programs and partnerships have diverted over 3,200 individuals from County jails into community-based recovery settings.

Despite diverting over 3,200 individuals, the number of persons in the jail system with serious clinical needs has continued to rise. Recognizing that the County needed to do more to keep pace with the scale of this issue, on August 14, 2018, the Board approved a motion aimed at assessment and expansion (“Scaling up Diversion and Reentry Efforts for People with Serious Clinical Needs,” Ridley-Thomas and Barger). This motion directed ODR to commission a study to determine the proportion of the jail population with clinical needs who are likely eligible for diversion into community-based recovery settings with wraparound services, and collaborate with relevant County

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departments and stakeholders to create a detailed 5-to-10-year Diversion and Reentry Road Map For Those With Serious Clinical Needs (Road Map).

While the RAND Corporation (RAND) has been commissioned to perform this analysis and will release its results later this year, a recently-released study by ODR based on a sample of 500 incarcerated individuals in jail mental health housing revealed that 56% of the study population was likely to be eligible for diversion into community-based services based on ODR's model. While the Board awaits RAND's more comprehensive study and the Road Map to follow, this estimate, that over half of the over 5,000 inmates with clinical needs may be appropriate for diversion and, with agreements from justice partners, enter ODR's housing program, underscores the opportunity for the County to start scaling this work.

In addition, on April 25, 2019, ODR, along with its justice partners, announced the Los Angeles County Superior Court's (Courts) decision to expand the geographic reach of the ODR Housing program. Through ODR's housing program, participants receive permanent supportive housing and long-term intensive case management to ensure their ongoing medical and mental healthcare needs are met. With 90% of participants remaining in housing after six months, the program is helping to break the cycle between jail and homelessness and demonstrates that community safety and reentry can be achieved through collaboration. Until now, release from jail into case management and housing was primarily available to people whose cases were heard in the Court's downtown Los Angeles Central District. But beginning this month, at the request of the Court, cases will be heard in two courthouses serving nine districts, and by the end of the year, persons with serious mental disorders from all over the County may benefit from the ODR intervention providing community treatment and services instead of incarceration.

This represents a geographical expansion, but not an increase in the number of clients that can be served. Without further resources, the same number of clients will be served but simply at more courthouses. Recognizing that the Court is looking to serve more clients at courthouses throughout the County, and that more persons with serious

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mental disorders in the jails may be candidates for diversion into community services based on the recent study, an interim plan is needed to begin scaling the ODR housing program to better serve clients identified through the expansion of the hubs. While an interim plan is not a replacement for the 5-10-year Road Map called for in the August 2018 motion, or a replacement for the upcoming recommendations of the Alternatives to Incarceration Workgroup created by the Board on February 12, 2019, it is an important step to ensure the County's goals of community safety, mental health treatment, and reducing homelessness can be met until a long-term plan is approved.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Instruct the Director of the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) to provide an ODR Housing Hub Expansion Plan (Plan) within 30 days in writing, including a timeline for increasing the number of clients served and the resources needed for community-based services, interim housing, permanent supportive housing, and staffing for ODR and its partners to sustain and expand this effort. This Plan should ensure the ODR Housing program can operate in all of the 12 geographic districts within the Los Angeles County Superior Court system.
2. Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in collaboration with the Director of ODR, to report back in writing in 30 days with a recommended funding plan for the ODR Hub Expansion Plan that ensures sustainability of existing operations and supports the growth of the program in future fiscal years, including funding allocations for expansion to be considered in the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 final budget.
3. Instruct the Director of ODR to align the above work with the upcoming work of the Alternatives to Incarceration Work Group, as specified in the February 12, 2019 motion and the 5-10-year Diversion and Reentry Road Map for People with Serious Clinical Needs, as specified in the August 14, 2018 motion.

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