

**Promoting Dignity for Young Women and Girls in the Probation Camps and
Juvenile Halls**

Improving outcomes for incarcerated girls and young women starts with ensuring they maintain a sense of dignity during the time they are held in the Los Angeles County's (County) Probation Department's camps and juvenile halls. Incarceration and removal from their families and communities can be a traumatic experience. On average, incarcerated youth spend about five to six months in probation camps and their time is regimented and their free will is diminished greatly. It is important that these young women are treated with respect and dignity. One of the few things young women can control while in custody is having autonomy over their own bodies and health. This is particularly important for young women in the juvenile justice system, many of whom have been victims of physical or sexual abuse.

Additionally, young women have unique needs in regards to their health and reproductive health. For example, in 2015, the National Commission on Correctional Health Care Standards for Health Services in Juvenile Detention and Confinement Facilities recommended that young women in custody have access to the full range of

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SOLIS _____

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HAHN _____

BARGER _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

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feminine hygiene products. Currently, however, young women in the camps and halls are only allowed access to sanitary napkins, not tampons. A November 2016 report by the Violence Intervention Program (VIP) noted that the poor quality of these pads and the preference for access to tampons was a reoccurring concern for the young, detained women who were interviewed.

Other concerns connected to the health and dignity of young women in the juvenile justice system include:

- Inadequate, uncomfortable and poor quality undergarments, including underwear (both paper underwear and previously worn underwear) and bras;
- Inadequate access to the appropriate family planning resources;
- Poor quality and ineffective hygiene products (e.g. toothbrushes, toothpastes, deodorants, etc.); and
- Inadequate prenatal and postpartum care that both support maternal and baby bonding and are aligned with best practices.

Allowing young women to choose what is right and comfortable for their bodies and health is aligned with national standards for youth in custody. By updating current practices and improving access to better products (including feminine hygiene products), the County can help young women feel respected and cared for. Further, treating girls with dignity better enables them to focus on their education, self-sufficiency, and rehabilitation.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Direct the Chief Probation Officer, in consultation with the Juvenile Court Health Services Medical Director, to report back to the Board in writing in 60 days on updated policies and protocols in the following areas that, among other things, improve the treatment of young women in the probation camps and juvenile halls and address related concerns documented in the Violence Intervention Program. Updated policies should include, if necessary and appropriate, options to switch vendors. Specifically:
 - a. An updated policy and implementation plan expanding access for feminine hygiene products to include tampons for young women in the probation camps and juvenile halls. This shall include:
 - i. A process to allow young women a choice as to what feminine hygiene products they receive as well as procedures in place to allow young women to have sufficient access to these products and to use the restroom as frequently as needed in order to safely and humanely use these products; and
 - ii. An education strategy, consistent with best practices and potentially including health education classes or access to health personnel/ counselors, focused on safe and proper use of feminine hygiene products and the support needed to guide young women through

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the experience of menstruation and using these various feminine hygiene products.

- b. An updated policy around access to better quality hygiene products more generally;
- c. An updated policy around access to better quality undergarments;
- d. An updated policy around access to a range of family planning and sexual health resources; and
- e. An updated policy for pregnant girls around prenatal, delivery and post-partum care, breast feeding, child bonding, maternal-child education, including potential strategies to safely keep more pregnant girls in the community rather than detained or incarcerated.

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(MN/EA)