AGN NO. [ ]

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL** May 2, 2023

**Expanding the Office of Diversion and Reentry Housing**

There are close to 14,000 people in the Los Angeles County (County) jail system. As of the Fourth Quarter of 2022, nearly 39 percent of the people in the jails were suffering due to mental health needs. Incredibly, six out of ten women in County jails have a serious mental illness and there are significant racial disparities, with mostly Black and Latinx/Hispanic people languishing in the jails.

As the County continues to embrace a "Care First" vision, it is essential that we properly address the mental health needs of those in our jails rather than expose them to turbulent and violent environments that exacerbate their conditions.

The County Department of Health Services' Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) has demonstrated success in addressing this crisis. In 2015, the Board of Supervisors created ODR to reduce the number of people incarcerated in County jails with mental health and/or substance use disorders who are at risk of homelessness. The goal was to reduce recidivism and to improve the health outcomes of justice-impacted populations who have the most serious underlying health needs.

As of February 2023, the County courts have released 9,442 people from jail and into ODR's care, where they have received community-based treatment and participated in various types of supportive housing programs. A RAND Corporation study of ODR's Supportive Housing Program found that 91 percent of its clients had stable housing after six months. Over time, some clients may drop out of the program due to various serious

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mental health or substance abuse problems. However, after even 12 months, 74 percent remained in stable housing and 86 percent had no new felony convictions. While this particular study did not include a comparison group, many of these individuals would have remained in jail significantly longer without permanent housing opportunities. Subsequent studies – through the use of a comparison group -- found improved outcomes for ODR's clients.

Several studies have confirmed that ODR's programming is successful at stabilizing people with serious mental illness so that they can safely live in the community. In turn, by stabilizing people with serious mental illness who so often cycle between jails and homelessness, ODR's housing model provides targeted resources to reduce housing instability for this high need population. A study by UCLA of 962 ODR clients shows that their medical and mental health hospitalization and emergency department visit rates decreased dramatically after they enrolled in ODR programs. This was further supported by a RAND study that found substantial cost savings were achieved through "less county jail time, fewer inpatient days for mental health and physical health care, fewer emergency department visits, and less temporary housing use relative to the comparison group" of individuals who were eligible for the program but could not participate due to limited space.

While ODR is working to add housing and supportive services to accommodate 1,305 new clients, deteriorating conditions in the jails have made clear that this will not be enough and that the County will need to be proactive in identifying funding for a subsequent expansion. Previous efforts to develop a funding roadmap for ODR took several years and multiple commitments, including motions in May 2019, July 2020, June 2021, and June 2022. In addition, on April 28, 2022, the Mental Health Commission voted to strongly recommend that the Department of Mental Health (DMH) allocate $25 million a year in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds to support ODR services to MHSA-eligible clients. Taken together, the County's efforts will net 1,305 new slots in 2025 (as illustrated below), but the high number of incarcerated individuals with mental health

needs makes clear that more will be needed in the future:

| Funding Source | Number of Slots | Estimated Full Implementation Date | Location |
|---|---|---|---|
| AB 109/NCC* | 160 | 6/30/2023 | Countywide |
| CFCI | 250 | 12/31/2023 | Countywide |
| AB 109 | 500 | 12/31/2024 | Countywide |
| MHSA | 395 | 6/30/2025 | Countywide |
| Total | 1305 | | |

While the County has made significant progress in funding critically needed ODR Housing slots, the high level of need requires the proactive development of a roadmap to avoid funding related bottlenecks in the future. To strategically break the cycle of homelessness and incarceration, the County must continue expanding access to community-based services for individuals with serious mental illness.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Instruct the Director of the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) to report back in writing within 90 days with an update on the 750 slots previously approved by the Board of Supervisors (including how many slots are online, how many are filled, and any challenges ODR is facing in standing up the slots) and a ramp-up plan, including a timeline, for increasing the number of ODR slots by an additional 1,000 slots starting in Fiscal Year 2024-25 and the resources needed for community-based services, interim housing, permanent supporting housing and staffing for ODR and its partners to sustain and continue to expand its efforts.
2. Instruct the Chief Executive Officer, in collaboration with the Director of ODR, to report back in writing in 90 days after the submission of the report back in Directive #1 to provide a list of potential funding sources that could be available to start expanding ODR housing in Fiscal Year 2024-25 to achieve an additional 1,000 slots over a multi-year timeline.

(CAS/YV/JM)

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