

Developing a Comprehensive Strategy to Address Substance Use Presence and Disorders in Juvenile Facilities

On June 10, 2025, the Los Angeles County (County) Probation Department put out a press release announcing the arrest and investigation of a Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) who was accused of smuggling alprazolam into Barry J. Nidorf (BJN). Then on June 30, 2025, the Probation Department announced the arrest of an employee of a contracted provider, from the non-profit Student Nest, for allegedly attempting to smuggle narcotics, more than 170 white pills, into Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH).

These incidents occurred approximately two years after Bryan Diaz, a young person who was detained at BJN, died from an overdose caused by fentanyl-laced narcotics. Prior to that tragedy, and following it, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a number of motions related to drugs and contraband in juvenile facilities. One motion¹ required the Probation Department to take steps to enhance security via increased canine searches and better substance use programming. Others² addressed the importance of ensuring naloxone, the opioid reversal drug, is

¹ [Addressing Emergent Illicit Substances and Contraband Entering the Los Angeles County Juvenile Halls](#)

² [Saving Lives by Making NARCAN Readily Accessible in the County's Juvenile Halls and Camps](#) and [Empowering Probation Providers to Carry Naloxone](#)

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widely available in juvenile facilities so employees, providers, and youth can respond to an overdose and potential save lives. Additionally, the Probation Department enhanced its security measures by implementing more robust canine and unit searches, and by increasing the presence of security specialists.

Despite these efforts, there is an ongoing challenge with mitigating the inflow of contraband into Probation's juvenile facilities, as well as in preventing substance use or treating young people who have Substance Use Disorders (SUD). The risk of another fatal overdose is too high, and the Probation Department, in collaboration with relevant County Partners, must do everything possible to eliminate substances from entering facilities, and to provide comprehensive, evidence-based, culturally relevant treatment for youth who are detained in the facilities. The Board proclaimed a local emergency at LPJH on December 17, 2024, in response to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) determining that the facility was unsuitable for the detention of youth. The local emergency is ongoing, and a vital part of providing a suitable detention environment for youth is preventing the presence of dangerous illicit drugs and providing adequate SUD treatment.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department to do the following:

1. Order and install airport-style body scanners – at least one at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH) and one at Barry J Nidorf Juvenile Hall (BJN) – and require that everyone who enters the facility (including all staff) go through the scanner;
2. Strengthen canine detection at LPJH and BJN by doing, at a minimum, the following:
 - a. Evaluating the contract with Interquest Detection Canines that was approved

- by the Board of Supervisors on October 22, 2024, to ensure effective and accurate canine detection;
- b. Ensuring that canines are present at the facilities' entrances during all hours that staff, contracted providers, and visitors are entering the facility (including all shift changes);
 - c. Ensuring all staff, contracted providers, and visitors entering the facilities go through canine screening in addition to the security screening, when dogs are present; and
 - d. Establishing a process to confirm consistency with the canine presence and screening process;
- 3. Strengthen the contract for security screening to increase the efficacy of detecting contraband at LPJH and BJN;
 - 4. In collaboration with the Department of Youth Development, reevaluate the background check and training process for contracted providers and Probation employees to find ways to better mitigate risk of providers and employees from bringing contraband into juvenile detention facilities;
 - 5. Consider updating policies to restrict and limit the number and types of materials that employees are allowed to bring into LPJH and BJN in their clear bags, allowing for more effective bag screening processes. Consideration should include the following:
 - a. Providing all Probation employees and other employees (including contracted employees) who interact with youth inside LPJH with any necessary office and work supplies they may need in the facility, as well as space to store supplies, and prohibiting employees from bringing office supplies back and forth from

home to work;

- b. Restricting Probation employees who may interact with youth from bringing anything into LPJH except for lunch, snacks, water/drinks, and ~~medical~~ necessities (i.e. keys, wallet, medical items) in a clear bag;
 - c. Restricting non-Probation employees who enter LPJH, including providers from contracted organizations, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Public Health, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Department of Youth Development, Credible Messengers, etc. from bringing anything into LPJH except for:
 - i. Lunch, snacks, water/drinks, and medical necessities in a clear bag; and
 - ii. Programming or school supplies, which must be brought in a clear bag and must be subject to enhanced searches by security via visually and physically examining all supplies; and
6. Cancel the contract with Student Nest, if feasible.

WE, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health – Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC), to do the following:

- 1. Execute a Memorandum of Understanding between the Probation Department and DPH-SAPC with the goal of enhancing substance use disorder (SUD) services and treatment offered in facilities, not just focusing on preventative services but also on SUD treatment for youth actively experiencing SUDs, with the goal of bringing in providers with experience working with this population; and
- 2. Informed by best practices, develop and implement a positive incentives structure so

youth who participate in SUD treatment programming are rewarded for their participation by receiving rewards, such as desirable snacks, special visits, etc.

WE, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department to report back in writing to the Board of Supervisors on all the above directives in 30 days, 90 days, and 180 days.

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