

COUNTYWIDE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE **September 13, 2023** MEETING

510 South Vermont Avenue
9th Floor – Conference Room C
Los Angeles, CA 90020

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES PRESENT

Chair Pro Tem: Erika Anzoategui, County Alternate Public Defender

Gabriella Aguilera for Jeff Macomber, Secretary, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Akemi Arakaki, Presiding Judge, Juvenile Superior Court

Pierre Arreola for Robin Toma, Executive Director, County Commission on Human Relations

Mirian Avalos for Selwyn Hollins, Director, County Internal Services Department

Adam Bettino for Fesia Davenport, County Chief Executive Officer

*Kelly Boyer for Haydee Feldstein Soto, Los Angeles City Attorney

Jeffrey Cohen-Laurie for Ricardo Ocampo, Supervising Judge, Criminal Division, Superior Court

Beatriz Dieringer, California League of Cities

Connie Draxler for Lisa Wong, Acting Director, County Department of Mental Health

Scott Fairfield, President, Los Angeles County Police Chiefs Association

Holly Francisco for Robert Luna, Sheriff

Ricardo Garcia, County Public Defender

Ryan Izell for Dr. Clemons Hong, Director, Office of Diversion and Reentry

*Robert Leoning for Natasha Alexander-Mingo, Chief U.S. Probation Officer

Kelly LoBianco, Director, County Department of Economic Opportunity

Edward McIntyre for Nichelle Henderson, Chair, County Quality & Productivity Commission

Emilio Mendoza for Brandon Nichols, Director, County Department of Children and Family Services

Robert Philibosian, Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County

Kris Pitcher for Michel Moore, Chief, Los Angeles Police Department

Maricela Ramirez for Debra Duardo, Superintendent, Los Angeles County Office of Education

Susan Sullivan Pithey for Robert Bonta, California Attorney General

Odey Ukpo, County Chief Medical Examiner

Judge Yvette Verastegui, Assistant Supervising Judge, Criminal Division, Superior Court

Guillermo Viera Rosa, Interim County Chief Probation Officer

*Alfonzo Webb for Alberto Carvalho, Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District

Sharon L. Woo for George Gascón, District Attorney

Doug Young for Chris Margaris, Chief, Southern Division, California Highway Patrol

Norayr Zurabyan for Dawyn R. Harrison, County Counsel

*Not a designated alternate

I. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Erika Anzoategui, County Alternate Public Defender, Chair Pro Tem

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m. by Erika Anzoategui, County Alternate Public Defender, Chair Pro Tem.

Ms. Anzoategui read the Land Acknowledgment for the County of Los Angeles, which can be found at the following link:

<https://lacounty.gov/government/about-la-county/land-acknowledgment/>

Self-introductions of members and alternates followed.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Erika Anzoategui, County Alternate Public Defender, Chair Pro Tem

There were no requests for revisions to the minutes of the February 8, 2023 meeting. Robert Philibosian of the Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County made a motion to approve the minutes. This was seconded by Susan Sullivan Pithey of the California Attorney General's Office.

ACTION: The motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2023 meeting was approved without objection.

III. CARE COURT

Connie D. Draxler, Acting Chief Deputy Director, Department of Mental Health

Connie Draxler, Acting Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Mental Health (DMH), provided a status update on CARE Court planning and implementation in Los Angeles County.

The CARE Court is named for the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act. CARE Court creates a new Civil Court process established to:

- Focus counties and other local governments on serving persons with untreated schizophrenia spectrum or other psychotic disorders.
- Provide behavioral health and housing resources and services.
- Protect self-determination and civil liberties by providing legal counsel and promoting supported decision making.
- Intervene sooner in the lives of those in need to provide support.
- Ensure local governments have support while driving accountability for their role.

In Los Angeles County, the CARE Court has a launch date of December 1, 2023 at the Norwalk Courthouse.

The CARE Court program helps individuals who meet the following criteria:

- Are 18 years or older.
- Have diagnosis in disorder class: schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders.
- Currently experiencing behaviors and symptoms associated with severe mental illness (SMI).
- Not clinically stabilized in on-going voluntary treatment.
- At least one of the following:
 - Unlikely to survive safely without supervision and condition is substantially deteriorating.
 - Needs services and supports to prevent relapse or deterioration, leading to grave disability or harm to others.
- Participation in a CARE Plan or Agreement is the least restrictive alternative.
- Likely to benefit from participating in a CARE Plan or Agreement.

Ms. Draxler discussed the process and timeline by which the CARE Court will work in this county; beginning with case initiation, followed by assessment, then to determination and treatment order, and finally to treatment implementation and Court oversight. If DMH was not the initial petitioner in the case, it will assume the role of petitioner if the process proceeds forward.

She also reviewed the various CARE Court referral entry points, among which are included self-petition and petition by certain individuals in the family, home, community, county, and tribal jurisdiction.

Petitions can be filed in-person at the Norwalk and Hollywood courthouses and anywhere that Self Help Centers (SHCs) are located. An e-file option may also be available in the future.

A Care Agreement is a Court-supervised agreement in which the client is participating in the process and is agreeing to the Care Agreement. A Care Plan is Court-ordered and may be more involuntary. The latter may result from an in-depth evaluation regarding the client's ability to say yes or no to the process.

A CARE Court Agreement/Plan may include behavioral health services, medications, housing resources, and/or social services and supports. Any medications would have to be those that the client is willing to take. Ms. Draxler noted that no involuntary medication can be ordered or administered as part of CARE Court.

CARE Court supervision is for one year and can be renewed for a second year.

The County of Los Angeles was allocated \$321 million from the state in housing assistance for the CARE Agreements/Plans. This includes \$260 million to DMH and \$61 million to the Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC).

Of the \$321 million, a total of \$241 million (75%) will go to Bridge Housing operational and supportive services. The remaining \$80 million (25%) will go to flexible funding categories.

The Superior Court, DMH, and Mental Health Advocacy Services have an MOU drafted to support CARE Court participants with mutual on-site staffing in the Self-Help Center (SHC) at the Norwalk Courthouse.

A question-and-answer period followed the presentation.

Ms. Draxler stated that DMH has been engaging in community outreach to inform and educate the public about the CARE Court.

There are two CARE courtrooms at the Norwalk courthouse and both are dedicated to CARE Court petitions. Ms. Draxler emphasized that petitions can be filed throughout the county at the closest SHC. In addition, video conferencing will be made available.

Additional information can be found online at <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/court-programs> and <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/court-programs/care-court>.

PowerPoint slides that were used in this presentation are available online at <https://ccjcc.lacounty.gov/meetings> under Documents.

ACTION: For information only.

IV. PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORKER PROGRAM

Dana Cherry, Mental Health Program Manager, Public Defender's Office
Carolee Matias, Mental Health Clinical Supervisor, Alternate Public Defender's Office

Dana Cherry, Mental Health Program Manager with the Public Defender's Office, and Carolee Matias, Mental Health Clinical Supervisor with the Alternate Public Defender's Office, provided an update on the Psychiatric Social Worker (PSW) program. Ms. Cherry and Ms. Matias have provided regular updates on the PSW program to this committee in past meetings.

As a reminder, the PSW program was launched with funding support from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The PSWs work cases and develop social history reports for eligible female clients. These reports may be considered during the adjudication process and can help to determine the best suitable outcome, including alternative sentencing dispositions that may be under consideration.

The Public Defender's Office (PD) began this program in September 2020 and the Alternate Public Defender's Office (APD) began three months later.

Of 373 combined clients that have been served by PD and APD PSWs since the program began, (282¹ with the Public Defender's Office and 91 with the Alternate Public Defender's Office), 28% are Black/African American and 37% are Indigenous and People of Color (IPOC). In addition, 58% have a substance use disorder, 72% have a history of mental health issues, 40% have a history of domestic violence, 40% have a history of sexual abuse, and 62% have experienced homelessness.

Other vulnerability factors experienced by some of the participants include physical abuse as a child, physical health issues, having been trafficked, developmental disability, and being LGBTQ+.

Ms. Matias discussed a recent successful case of an individual with a troubled background who was able to receive needed services through the help of the program.

Recent six-month program statistics were discussed. Of a combined 47 clients served, the time saved as a result of the PSW program amounts to 51.81 years (18,909 days), with a cost avoidance to CDCR of nearly \$4.2 million.

The 36-month program statistics (September 3, 2020 through August 31, 2022) show that, of 408 total clients served, the time saved as a result of the PSW program amounts to 2,433 years (834,262 days), with a cost avoidance to CDCR of just over \$193 million.

The results of clients being served by the PSW program can include the following:

- Case being closed
- Client released on Probation
- Ordered time served
- Accepted to Women's Reentry Court
- Accepted to the Office of Diversion and Reentry
- Released to a residential and/or housing program
- Released to a community-based substance abuse or mental health program
- Refused services/conflict/private counsel/brief service
- Reduced sentences
- State hospital
- Dismissal
- Brief service
- Mental health diversion

PowerPoint slides that were used in this presentation are available online at <https://ccjcc.lacounty.gov/meetings> under Documents.

¹ 47 clients are not included in the totals.

ACTION: For information only.

V. ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME TASK FORCE

Deputy Chief Kris Pitcher, Los Angeles Police Department

Lieutenant Michael McComas, Los Angeles Police Department

Deputy Chief Kris Pitcher and Lieutenant Michael McComas of the Los Angeles Police Department made a presentation on the Organized Retail Crime Task Force (ORCTF).

Beginning in early July 2023, a trend emerged in which numerous individuals would enter a commercial establishment, take large volumes of merchandise, and then flee. These incidents began to escalate into robberies where weapons, physical threats, or bear spray were used.

The targets of these thefts were high-end purses, backpacks, clothing, shoes, and cologne. It is surmised that these items were selected because they are expensive and easy to sell (fence).

While these incidents are not new, they are happening with greater frequency and, as noted, law enforcement has seen an increase in violence and threats of violence where there hadn't been initially.

The ORCTF has been formed to address these thefts. The Task Force was created on August 21, 2023 and consists of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

The response includes prevention efforts, by working with the retailers, and law enforcement efforts following crimes. The latter includes in-depth investigations to locate the individuals involved as well as those that are selling the stolen items.

A video was shown that provides an example of a "flash-rob", or "smash and grab", in which numerous individuals grab items in a store and flee in an organized retail theft incident.

A case study was discussed in which two individuals entered a Versace store in the Beverly Center in August and stole \$36,000 worth of merchandise. One individual was subsequently arrested for robbery and \$12,000 worth of merchandise has been recovered.

The ORCTF has three squads of detectives and officers ready to respond 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Different approaches to combating the thefts include:

- Conducting BLITZ operations as prevention measures;
- Conducting undercover operations based on actionable intelligence; and

- Responding to incidents that have occurred with additional personnel (fingerprint, electronic, etc.) to ensure maximum collection of evidence.

Deputy Chief Pitcher noted that law enforcement is also monitoring social media for both prevention efforts and locating those who are selling stolen items.

The following results of the ORCTF's activities were reported:

- 24 individuals arrested for robbery (including car-jacking)
- 2 individuals arrested for fencing
- 5 individuals arrested in BLITZ operations
- 7 search warrants have been served
- Recovered \$300,000+ in stolen merchandise
- Recovered 5 handguns
- There have been 19 filings with 4 pending
 - 26 charges for Robbery
 - 14 charges for Grand Theft
 - 2 for Burglary

In response to an inquiry, Chief Pitcher stated that organized retail theft is a trend that is being seen all over the country.

PowerPoint slides that were used in this presentation are available online at <https://ccjcc.lacounty.gov/meetings> under Documents.

ACTION: For information only.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.