



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

CHILD WELFARE SAFETY NET TASK FORCE

GWYN LURIE, CHAIR

Report of the Santa Barbara County Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force

April 5, 2016

1st District
Gwyn Lurie

2nd District
Amy Zuchowicz

3rd District
Veronica Sandoval

4th District
Dominick Palera

5th District
Ralph Ybarra

As the Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force , we have been tasked with examining the systems that are in place to protect Santa Barbara County's most vulnerable children and ensure that these systems are performing at their highest levels.

Our goal is that no child in our County be allowed to fall between the cracks, as it is every child's right to have a safe, healthy and happy home from which to thrive, succeed and prosper.

To that end, the Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force, as created by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors on 4/14/2015, has been charged with conducting a holistic assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of the county's Child Welfare System and to produce a report for the Board of Supervisors which:

- Acknowledges what parts of the system are currently working well and why.
- identifies and makes recommendations regarding areas of the system that could be improved.
- Identifies and makes recommendations regarding existing needs not currently addressed by the system and what could be done to fill those gaps.

Child Welfare Safety Task Force

History:

- 4/4/15 Task force created by the Board of Supervisors
- 6/2/15 Final members of the Task Force Appointed
- 7/27/15 Initial Meeting of the Task Force

Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force

Over the course of 8 months:

- 19 publicly noticed meetings
- 87 individual stakeholders interviewed across all program areas related to Child Welfare in Santa Barbara County



Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force

The Task Force heard stories of courage, resilience, and hope. And too we repeatedly heard stories of frustration, exhaustion and pain.

We came to understand that on our watch, some of our most at-risk children are not getting the support they need, and that that can and must change.

Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force

But from every person, with whom we spoke, we heard optimism and hope and faith in a system that strives to and one day truly could protect and support every single one of the most voiceless and vulnerable among us: the children.

Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force

Immediate Recommendation:

Establish an independent

Chief County Child Advocate Position

– a single entity held accountable for what happens to at-risk children before, during, and after they are in the County's care.

Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force

Additional Recommendations
are in the written report



Child Welfare Safety Net Task Force

Thank you.

Gwyn Lurie, Chair

Dominick Palera, 4th District

Veronica Sandoval, 3rd District

Amy Zuchowicz, 2nd District