

Sarah Mayer

Public Comment - LWVSB

A-43



From: Gail Osherenko <gail.osherenko@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 6, 2024 2:45 PM
To: sbcob; Sarah Mayer
Subject: Fwd: LWVSB/CLUE-SB letter to BoS re Wellpath contract
Attachments: LWVSBCLUE-SB Letter to BOS May 4.2024.pdf

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Dear Sarah,

Below and attached is the message I sent at 5:51pm on Sat. May 4. This is the letter that is related to Admin Agenda **A43** on the May 7 Board of Supervisors agenda.

Thank you for being sure it is included in the packets for tomorrow's BoS meeting.

Gail
805 886 1182

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Gail Osherenko <gail.osherenko@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, May 4, 2024 at 5:51 PM
Subject: LWVSB/CLUE-SB letter to BoS re Wellpath contract
To: <Clerk@santabarbaraca.gov>, <steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org>, Joan Hartmann <jhartmann@countyofsb.org>, lcapps@countyofsb.org <lcapps@countyofsb.org>, Das Williams <DasWilliams@santabarbaraca.gov>, <Nelson@bos.countyofsb.org>
Cc: <sheriff@sbsheriff.org>, Miyasato, Mona <mmiyasato@countyofsb.org>, Dr. Hammami <MHammami@sbcphd.org>, Tracy Macuga <tmacuga@publicdefendersb.org>, <anavarro@sbcbswell.org>

Clerk and Board of Supervisors,

Please find the attached letter regarding the Wellpath contract from the League of Women Voters' of Santa Barbara and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Santa Barbara.

We understand that the issue is not on the agenda for your May 7 meeting; however, we urge you to consider our concerns regarding the contract for 2024-2025 now being negotiated.

Thank you,
Gail Osherenko
on behalf of the Criminal Justice Reform Workgroup



May 4, 2024

Dear Board of Supervisors,

Thank you, Supervisors Capps, Hartmann, and Williams, for arranging and attending the April 3rd study session to hear concerns and recommendations regarding healthcare in our County Jails.

The CLUE/League of Women Voters Criminal Justice Reform Workgroup aims to eliminate injustice in our County, advance humane treatment of people enmeshed in our criminal justice system and prioritize community-based alternatives to incarceration.

Our particular focus and message at this time concerns how including specific provisions in the Wellpath contract can improve conditions for jail residents and our community.

Below you will find a summary of key points which we urge you to consider and include in the Wellpath contract extension presently under consideration.

Wellpath contract provisions. Address jail residents' needs for improved medical and mental health treatment as follows:

1. Increase County oversight of Wellpath services (Public Health and Behavioral Wellness) to assure contractual staffing and service requirements are met by mandating the use and reporting of the Wellpath Quarterly Monitoring Tool. Contractually require accurate and complete record-keeping that will enable oversight efforts to identify strengths and shortfalls in healthcare delivery to jail residents. Evidence of need: Recently Wellpath reported 90% compliance using self-identified measures while failing to meet the County Murray Case compliance standards in areas such as intake, crisis services, ongoing services, discharge planning, etc.
2. Hold Wellpath accountable for invoice credits when staffing shortfalls exceed the 2% threshold. This requirement is in the current contract; however compliance has not been enforced, costing the County unnecessary expenses.
3. Hold Wellpath accountable for prompt and accurate intake assessments in accord with criteria of the Behavioral Wellness Monitoring Tool, for example with interdisciplinary team evaluation for swift diversion referrals as appropriate.
4. Specifically require healthcare delivery that meets Behavioral Wellness monitoring measures and medically accepted standards of care with significant contractual penalties if identified deficiencies are not promptly corrected.
5. Assure all Wellpath clinical staff are thoroughly trained in crisis intervention.

6. Contractually require a referral and “warm handoff” for individuals released from custody to community-based resources and specify that Wellpath will issue prescribed medications needed to bridge the gap.

Sheriff's Department. We also recommend and urge cooperation and participation by the Sheriff's Department as follows:

1. Continue to support jail diversions as a priority to safely reduce the jail population, which lessens the volume of jail healthcare needs, improves services, and reduces healthcare staffing needs.
2. Ensure accurate auditing and review of Wellpath invoices prior to processing for payment. For example, the current contract requires credits to be issued when staffing shortages exceed the 2% threshold, but these credits have not yet been issued, resulting in overpayment to Wellpath.
3. Hold Wellpath accountable for timely intake assessments.
4. Assure all Wellpath clinical staff are thoroughly trained in crisis intervention.
5. Prioritize transfers of jail residents to their medical/mental health appointments and assure those appointments occur in a confidential setting.
6. Expand Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) and improve monitoring to prevent in custody opioid overdoses.
7. Address Sheriff's Department staff and service shortfalls by pro-active use of Electronic Monitoring and other initiatives to reduce our jail population.

Comments:

Shortfalls in staffing and services from Wellpath, and shortfalls in Sheriff's Department custodial staffing, are materially affecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of individuals housed in our county jails. Wellpath's shortfalls can and should be contractually addressed now.

We are particularly concerned about the inefficient oversight of the Wellpath contract. The Murray case alleges that Santa Barbara County and its Sheriff's Office failed "... to provide minimally adequate medical and mental health care to people in our jails." Santa Barbara County's Department of Behavioral Wellness Mental Health has developed and uses a Provider Wellpath Quarterly Monitoring Tool that shows jail residents continue to be harmed by Remedial Plan compliance delays. The contract must require the Wellpath Quarterly Monitoring Tool be utilized. Proactive oversight of the Wellpath contract by the County can improve current conditions for jail residents, while longer term structural improvements required by the Remedial Plan are being implemented.

It is clear our Board of Supervisors care about the quality of supervision, service, and treatment provided to individuals housed in our county jails. Implementing the recommendations above will address current healthcare shortfalls and create a healthier and safer environment for our custody staff as well.

Thank you again for your continued commitment and service to our community.

Kind regards,

CLUE-SB/LWVSB
Criminal Justice Reform Workgroup

CLERGY & LAITY UNITED FOR ECONOMIC
JUSTICE- SANTA BARBARA

Maureen Earls,
Co-Chair Criminal Justice Workgroup

Laurence Severance, Ph.D., J.D.
Co-Chair Criminal Justice Workgroup

cc: Sheriff Bill Brown
Public Health Director Mouhanad Hammami
Behavioral Wellness Director Toni Navarro
Public Defender Tracy Macuga
SB County CEO Mona Miyasato

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
SANTA BARBARA

Gail Osherenko,
Co-Chair Criminal Justice Workgroup

Pam Flynt Tambo,
LWVSB, Vice President Social Policy