



*Response to Grand Jury
Alcohol, Drug & Mental Health Services
Inpatient Psychiatric Treatment: 16 Beds....and Deeper in Debt
July 7, 2008*

Finding 1

There are not enough inpatient psychiatric beds within Santa Barbara County to serve its residents, which results in patients being transported out of the area.

Agree with finding.

Recommendation 1

Santa Barbara County should plan to expand its psychiatric inpatient capacity, preferably by opening another inpatient facility in North County.

Will not be implemented because not warranted or not reasonable.

The Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) acknowledges that there is limited psychiatric inpatient bed capacity in Santa Barbara County, particularly in North County. However, there are not financial resources to fund an undertaking of this scope and cost.

I am pleased to report that the Department has taken steps to increase responsiveness to persons in North County who experience acute psychiatric distress.

In Spring 2008, ADMHS opened CARES North, an assessment and treatment center that provides intake, evaluation, crisis stabilization and brief interventions for individuals who have psychiatric conditions that significantly impair their daily lives.

CARES North includes a 12-bed crisis residential treatment center, licensed by the State Department of Mental Health as a short term crises residential facility and licensed by

Community Care Licensing/State Department of Social Services as a Social Rehabilitation Facility. This center provides an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization for individuals whose urgent mental health treatment needs can be effectively addressed through short-term, 24-hour crisis residential services. Interventions provided by the crisis residential treatment center include 24 hour psychiatric availability, medication administration and monitoring, consultation and support to family members, as well as coordination with ongoing community mental health services. The community has been very pleased with the new CARES program in northern Santa Barbara County. Through CARES services, many clients can be diverted from unnecessary transport to Santa Barbara and or Ventura for emergency psychiatric treatment

Finding 2

Since the closure of St. Francis Hospital, Santa Barbara County lacks a geriatric psychiatric inpatient facility. The existing Psychiatric Health Facility is not appropriate for geriatric patients, and Cottage Hospital's inpatient psychiatric unit does not have involuntary inpatient capability.

Agree with finding.

Recommendation 2

The County should explore the possibility of a partnership with one of the general hospitals in the area to open a geriatric psychiatric unit.

Have not yet implemented, but will implement during FY08-09 fiscal year.

The Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) has not recently explored the possibility of a partnership with one of the general hospitals in the area to open a geriatric psychiatric unit. During the next 12 months, ADMHS will initiate contact with the general hospitals in the County to explore the feasibility of developing geriatric psychiatric bed capacity, to include an exploration of the financial viability of any such development.

Finding 3:

Data collecting and reporting has been inconsistent, disorganized, and incomplete, which has resulted in conflicting and inaccurate information and possible lost revenue. The new data collection system that has been in place since July 2007 has not functioned well and some staff are not able to use it.

Partially agree/partially disagree with finding.

Recommendation 3:

Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services should obtain and implement a data collection system that is user friendly, consistent, and interfaces seamlessly with information entered by clinicians. All data, including admissions and discharges from all County and contract facilities, should be entered into the system as these events occur. The billing status (e.g. Medi-Cal, Medicare, private insurance, etc.) should be clearly noted and readily retrievable.

Have implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

In 2007, the Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) phased out its former system, Echo InSyst, as this company was scheduled to discontinue its support to this 25 year old system. ADMHS adopted a new system, Echo ShareCare. The Echo ShareCare product was chosen in part because of its ability to incorporate Alcohol and Drug Program features such as CalOms and ASI. Echo also demonstrated the flexibility that permitted ADMHS to retain Clinicians Gateway as our clinical data entry system. In June 2007 the new system implementation occurred. Implementation challenges emerged for a number of months, but significant progress has been achieved through a close working partnership between ADMHS and Echo.

Finding 4:

The clinical records at the Psychiatric Health Facility are still paper-based, necessitating staff to manually mail or fax records to outpatient clinics responsible for follow-up care of patients after discharge. Admission and discharge summaries are typed, but other records are handwritten and frequently difficult to read.

Agree with finding.

Recommendation 4:

The Psychiatric Health Facility should convert to electronic recordkeeping, as is now done in all outpatient facilities, thereby making patient records readily accessible to those responsible for providing aftercare.

Have not yet implemented, but have timetable for implementation.

The Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) plans to convert all users into electronic submission during FY 2008/2009.

Finding 7:

The cash basis accounting system used by the Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services does not give a clear picture of the financial performance of the Department.

Partially disagree with the finding.

Recommendation 7:

Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services should initiate accrual basis accounting instead of, or in addition to, the current cash basis system.

Have not yet implemented, but have timetable for implementation.

The Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) in concert with the Auditors Controllers office is scheduled to convert to a modified accrual base accounting system effective, first quarter of FY 2008/2009. The ADMHS Department and the Auditor's Office have and will continue to work closely in this transition in order to best reflect the Departments ongoing financial status .