



# South Coast Homeless Advisory Committee • Santa Barbara County

mmitee Co-Chairs

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara 93101

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Dear Board Of Supervisors,

The South Coast Homeless Advisory Committee would like to take this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report entitled, "Homeless Mentally Ill Recidivism- This is not good for the County." In this report the Grand Jury examined the "vicious cycle of mentally ill, possibly substance-abusing, uninsured, indigent, homeless individuals recycling in and out of jail." The South Coast Homeless Advisory Committee is concerned with the Santa Barbara County Jail being used as the de facto mental institution for the County.

Recidivism issues are serious, and Restorative and Mental Health Courts make sense. The revolving door of the jail as a mental health holding facility can only be corrected by creating proper housing and supportive services. The South Coast Homeless Advisory Committee promotes and supports this policy, which would serve as a permanent solution to close the revolving door, allow our county jail to house inmates and serve the purpose intended, while obtaining permanent proper care and facilities for the homeless mentally ill.

People should not be released into homelessness from the jail or hospital. We must prioritize funding, coordination of County departments and cooperation with non-profits to achieve this goal. It is not the role of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services to coordinate this effort (but Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services plays a critical role). We need to see therapeutic outcomes that are measurable from this department.

Additionally, the acquisition of benefits for those who are eligible needs to be strongly encouraged. We would like to know how the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services' SOAR program will/can be expanded to see that those who are living on the street and are eligible for SSI and health benefits receive those benefits. There must be measurable results. This includes 1. how many people are participating in the program and 2. how quickly they are enrolled in benefits programs. Regular reports on the success of this program are necessary. Jobs and jobs programs that allow people to be self-sufficient are also important for people who do not qualify for benefits.

The South Coast Homeless Advisory Committee appreciates the opportunity to respond and thanks you for your time in reviewing the Grand Jury report on "Homeless Mentally Ill Indigent Recidivism." We look forward to working with everyone involved to find a permanent solution.

Sincerely,

The South Coast Homeless Advisory Policy Committee