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To: County Supervisors Nelson, Hartmann, Hart, Lavagnino, and Williams

From: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Santa Barbara County

Subject: County Budget Hearings: Support for the Public Defenders' Expansion Request

Date: June 5, 2021

NAMI Santa Barbara County writes in full support of the Public Defender's expansion requests.

Modest requests to bolster the department's IT and Fiscal operations promise to more fully and adequately support the department's work.

Additional permanent legal staffing for Misdemeanors will more fully support diversion of community-based treatment for persons with mental illness -- effective diversion and return to the community constituting a major goal of our NAMI Affiliate.

Given the initial strong success of the department's Holistic Defense program, and the challenges posed by limited staffing, we were surprised not to see an expansion request for social workers. We strongly support such expansion.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynne Gibbs".

Lynne Gibbs, Chair

NAMI Santa Barbara County Public Policy Committee