

Alexander, Jacquelyne

From: familiesact@gmail.com on behalf of Suzanne Riordan <suzanne@familiesact.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2018 1:03 AM
To: Wolf, Janet; Hartmann, Joan; Adam, Peter; Lavagnino, Steve; Williams, Das; sbcob
Subject: August 14 Departmental Agenda Item #7

Re: August 14th, Departmental Agenda Item #

Families ACT! wishes to congratulate the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors for adopting the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (aka Laura's Law) Pilot Project, as well as The County Behavior Wellness Department for achieving measurable results to date, as documented in the recently released Harder Report.

Now that data is forthcoming about the results achieved, we submit the following observations and suggestions for improving the program:

1. Although the reduction in the number of incarcerations that participants had been experiencing before their inclusion in the program is impressive, it has declined since the program was first implemented and is less significant than the programs in other counties have reported.
2. We are concerned that if the 38% of the total number of clients referred to AOT who failed to seek treatment within 90 days had been referred to a civil court, outcomes would have been more impressive. In fact, not one referral to the court was made.
3. The Report failed to estimate the amount of money that Santa Barbara County saved since the project was adopted by reducing the number of days of costly incarceration and hospitalization that the clients enrolled in the project needed.
4. Other counties are funding their program largely through Medi-Cal reimbursements and MHSA, putting less of a burden on the General Fund. Why is this not being done in Santa Barbara County?
5. In the interest of transparency and participatory democracy, we strongly suggest that an AOT Community Advisory Council composed of family members, advocates and other stakeholders be created to work with the Behavior Wellness department in improving the implementation of the program and maximizing its efficiency.

The adoption and implementation of the Assisted Outpatient Treatment pilot project in Santa Barbara County represents a giant step towards serving the needs of our residents with mental health disabilities.

Unfortunately Families ACT! continues to interface daily with families whose loved ones with a mental health condition are not receiving the level of care required to address their needs. We can testify that our County still has a very long way to go to adequately serve the unmet needs of hundreds of our residents. Many of the family members struggling to find care for their loved ones would be more than happy to meet with you to help you understand the specific obstacles they encounter in seeking care.

Let us work together to address the remaining gaps in the Continuum of Care and make our County a model of what works to design a system of mental health care that we can be proud of.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Riordan

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Stop the Revolving Door! Beds Not Cells!

Suzanne Riordan
Executive Director
Families ACT!
www.FamiliesACT.org
805-637-1339