

LATE
DIST

Katherine Douglas *Public Comment, Public Safety - Group 1*

From: David Ketelaar CA-SANTA MARIA <david.ketelaar@commonspirit.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 9:07 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Critical Support for Behavioral Sciences Unit (BSU) and Dr. Cherylynn Lee

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Dear Honorable Board Members,

I am writing with profound concern regarding the proposed cut to the Behavioral Sciences Unit (BSU) and Manager position within the Sheriff's Office. As a physician at Marian Regional Medical Center with nearly 30 years of experience providing acute mental healthcare in Santa Barbara County, I urge you to reconsider this potentially catastrophic decision.

From my front-line perspective, the establishment of the BSU under Dr. Cherylynn Lee's leadership represents one of the most significant and positive advancements in our community's response to mental health crises. I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact since she began contributing to the Sheriff's Office. Dr. Lee's leadership has been the driving force behind vital programs impacting patient care and community safety, including:

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- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT): A course I have helped teach, essential for equipping first responders to de-escalate crises safely and effectively.
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- County Co-Response Program: Unbelievably helpful in integrating mental health expertise into law enforcement responses, leading to more humane outcomes and safer interactions.
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- Organizational Wellness and Peer Support: Dr. Lee has had a very positive effect on staff well-being, recognizing the immense pressure
- faced by our law enforcement and healthcare professionals. She has provided this expertise to our hospital staff at Marian Regional on multiple occasions.
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My decade of collaboration with Dr. Lee confirms her extraordinary clinical acuity, collaborative spirit, and unwavering dedication in strengthening the bridge between law enforcement and healthcare. Our community has been safer because of her efforts and your support for these programs. This program has enhanced community respect for the work done by Santa Barbara County Sheriff Deputies.

The removal of Dr. Lee and the elimination of the Behavioral Sciences Manager role would not merely be a cut; it would be a severe amputation of a vital function supporting our entire mental health crisis continuum. With your direct support, these excellent programs were created. Please do not go backwards and eliminate a program you did a great job creating with your support. The BSU has saved many lives and reduced liability all while enhancing wellness and mental health for law enforcement and hospital staff.

I urge the Board to recognize the profound and irreplaceable value of Dr. Cherylynn Lee's position and the Behavioral Sciences Unit. Her work is not a luxury; it has become a fundamental pillar of our community's ability to respond to mental health crises effectively and humanely. Continuing this position is essential for the well-being of our patients, our first responders, and our entire community.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this critical matter.

Sincerely,

David Ketelaar, MD

Medical Director, Behavioral Health Services

Marian Regional Medical Center

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Katherine Douglas *Public Comment, Public Safety*

From: Robert Samaniego <samaniego3598@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 2:03 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Board of Supervisors public comment(written statement) SBSO/Dr. Lee

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Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

Dr. Lee has been crucial in the implementation and on-going training of the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department's Crisis Intervention Training. It's my opinion that without her, only a limited amount of deputies would have the opportunity to attend this training. Her dedication to this training has put Santa Barbara County in a position other counties are striving to catch up to.

These trainings have provided deputies with crucial skills to effectively handle high stress situations involving individuals experiencing mental health and/or drug abuse issues in a compassionate manner. This has also changed the culture of the department in a very positive way. By enhancing deputies ability to recognize and address mental health challenges, crisis intervention training not only helps prevent potential violence and misunderstandings but also builds trust between law enforcement and communities, ultimately contributing to more positive outcomes and a reduction in recidivism.

In an era where mental health awareness is paramount, such training is essential for creating a more humane and effective law enforcement system.

Having Dr. Lee within the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department is vital for several reasons. First, she provides deputies with immediate access to mental health support, helping them process the emotional and psychological toll of their work. This support can prevent burnout, reduce stress-related issues, and promote overall well-being among deputies. I thank her personally for guiding me when I've needed help.

Having Dr. Lee at the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department enhances the department's ability to respond effectively to mental health crises in the community. She offers valuable insights into handling sensitive situations involving individuals with mental health disorders, improving de-escalation tactics and fostering a more empathetic approach.

With Dr. Lee at the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department, she has likely reduced or prevented civil rights lawsuits and injuries sustained to deputies and/or community members. Through her mental health trainings and articles written and shared, high stakes assessments during CNT/SET callouts, daily calls for assistance on complicated mental health calls for service, and accessibility for deputies dealing with personal mental health issues. It is a smart business decision to have an embedded phycologist, Dr. Lee, working with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department.

It is my belief that Dr. Lee has saved lives in our county and others through her endless drive to help by working targeted threats cases within our county and assisting others. She has also been an advocate to those in need in the community when our county mental health system has appeared to fail them.

The presence of Dr. Lee not only benefits the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department but also strengthens the relationship between deputies and the community by fostering improved understanding and support for mental health matters.

Thanks,

Robert Samaniego

Katherine Douglas

From: Hilary <peacetrehealing@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 3:31 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Budget Input

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Because people of color are still disproportionately pulled over and prosecuted, I am very concerned that if we continue to give huge amounts of money to the sheriff's department we will only continue to create a discriminatory county. I urge you all to consider the basic human rights of each person residing in SB as you make budget decisions, and to please allow Equity to be your guiding principle. Please consider supporting safety nets and programs that support at-risk populations, as they will ensure that everyone thrives in this community.

Thank you,
Hilary Kimblin Licht

Katherine Douglas

From: Pamela Wilkinson <ppwilkinson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 3:48 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Public comment for BOS Budget Workshop Wednesday, April 15 re item Public safety: Sheriff's Dept

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

I share the deep concern of the County of Santa Barbara's projected revenue shortfall for next year, and applaud the efforts made in these budget workshops.

I write to comment on the critical importance of the Sheriff Department's Behavioral Sciences Unit, and specifically the manager's position, the ONLY position in the BSU. This position must be preserved.

The BSU Manager position fills essential roles including managing the county's Co-Response teams, conducting the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Academy, consults with field deputies; counsels deputies suffering trauma, brings in grant funding far greater than the salary of the manager, is the only psychologist position in the department (when a large portion of the jail population suffers with mental illness), and acts as a liaison between Wellpath, Behavioral Wellness, the Mental Wellness Center and NAMI Santa Barbara.

Consider the many services provided by this position, and the fact that the grant funding far exceeds the cost of the position, when you consider where to cut costs.

Thank you,
Pam Wilkinson