



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: 3rd District Supervisor &
District Attorney
Department No.: 011
For Agenda Of: 5/10/16
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 Mins
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Board Member Supervisor Doreen Farr and District Attorney Joyce Dudley
Contact Info: Erin Weber, District Representative, 568-2192
SUBJECT: Report Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

- a) Receive and file a report on sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County;
- b) Provide other direction as appropriate; and
- c) Determine that these actions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b) (3), finding that the execution of these actions are covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment, and where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment, the activities are not subject to CEQA.

Summary Text:

This item is before you today to provide an update on the scope of sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County, needs of survivors and provision of County services.

Background:

Sex trafficking occurs when someone uses force, fraud, coercion to induce a commercial sex act or causes a minor to commit a commercial sex act in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter or clothes. Once individuals are sex trafficked, their average life expectancy is estimated at only another 7-10 years, with homicide and AIDS being the top causes of death. According to an FBI Victim Specialist for Los Angeles, the Central Coast is a hub for sex trafficking, since until recently the crime was rarely identified, investigated or prosecuted. Recent investigations and victim testimony have revealed that

Santa Barbara County is a natural transit corridor for trafficking activity between major metropolitan areas to the south and north.

Investigating this crime and serving survivors is complex and multiple County departments are involved. Survivors of human sex trafficking typically do not see themselves as victims, are often resistant to services, and suffer from alcohol and drug addiction, as well as other serious health conditions. Traditional support models are often ineffective, complicated by the fact that survivors frequently run away and are loyal to and dependent on those who are exploiting them.

In August 2013 the District Attorney Joyce Dudley initiated the Human Trafficking Task Force (Task Force), which includes representatives from 37 agencies, including but not limited to, law enforcement, Child Welfare Services, Juvenile Probation, Behavioral Wellness, non-profit organizations and the faith community. The Task Force has provided a venue for training, networking, development of strategies to identify and investigate human trafficking cases and provision of collaborative services.

In order to address the scope of the problem locally, the Task Force conducted a Needs Assessment focused specifically on sex trafficked children, under 18 years old, in Santa Barbara County, which was made possible by a grant from the Santa Barbara Foundation. (See attachment A: Needs Assessment.) The Needs Assessment is a road map for Santa Barbara County and provided critical information about the scope of child sex trafficking locally, needs of survivors and gaps in services. Thirteen different agencies participated in over 30 hours of interviews.

The study also included an analysis of internet escort websites to shed light on the prevalence of sex trafficking locally. In a two-week period, a total of 675 advertisements for “escort” services were placed in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria on one website alone. Although half of the advertisements were placed for escorts aged 18-21 years old, interview participants, including survivors, have indicated that girls *under* the age of 18 are also advertised as escorts.

The Needs Assessment identified 45 confirmed, unduplicated child survivors of sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County between 2012 and 2014, 80 suspected (unconfirmed), and 461 extremely vulnerable. Ninety six percent of confirmed child survivors are residents of Santa Barbara County. Although many factors have been associated with vulnerability for child sex trafficking, children who were identified as high risk typically have a history of abuse and/or neglect, foster care placement, running away, homelessness, and involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Confirmed survivors may come into contact with many different County departments, which highlights the need for data sharing and cross departmental collaboration. The Needs Assessment revealed that 44 percent of confirmed survivors were first identified by Mental Health Staff at Juvenile Hall, 42 percent by Law Enforcement, and 13 percent by Social Service Providers.

Highly summarized, a few recommendations from the Needs Assessment are as follows:

- (a) Implement cross-system protocols and screening tools to identify survivors and those at risk;
- (b) Need for more proactive investigations;
- (c) Need for trauma-informed, survivor-centered care, including drug and alcohol abuse services for children; and
- (d) Establishment of safe & secure emergency, transitional & permanent housing.

The following chart outlines steps County departments are taking to strengthen the continuum of care for survivors and implement recommendations from the Needs Assessment:

Needs Assessment Recommendations	Ongoing Implementation	Future Challenges
Need for protocols, screening tools & data management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWS lead development of interagency protocol (SB 855) • CSEC Specialty Court • CWS West Coast Clinic Screening Tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal privacy barriers • No central data system • Training & implementation
Proactive investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DA & SO applied for Federal grant funding to fund task force development, including dedicated investigator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources • Training • Philosophical shift from criminalization to victim services • Public education/awareness
Trauma-informed, survivor-centered care, including drug & alcohol abuse services for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “RISE” program: bio-psycho-social approach in -home like setting, non-traditional therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable funding (RISE grant limited to 3 years)
Need for emergency, transitional and permanent housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith community providing fully furnished apartments for adult placements • RISE program includes drop-in day centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of options for this population, especially if under 18 years old

Impacted departments – District Attorney, Behavioral Wellness, Child Welfare Services, Probation and Sheriff’s Office - will share supplemental information during the Board presentation.

Local agencies are increasingly aware of the prevalence of sex trafficked victims among current clients with whom they interact and are implementing more efficient and effective programs and services for survivors. Santa Barbara County departments are collaborating on several new key projects, including CSEC Specialty Court (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children), Interagency Protocol Task Force (lead by CWS, per SB 855 state mandate), application for federal grant funding to bolster District Attorney and Sheriff resources, and development of a new Behavioral Wellness, MHSA Innovation Program called “RISE”, Resiliency Interventions for Sexual Exploitation. However, there continue to be challenges ahead, including provision of coordinated services for highly vulnerable survivors, availability of resources, cross-jurisdictional cases, public awareness and data sharing.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Needs Assessment

Authored by:

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cc:

Joyce Dudley, District Attorney
Alice Gleghorn, Behavioral Wellness
Lupe Rabago, Probation

Bill Brown, Sheriff
Daniel Nielson, Department of Social Services