



P.O. Box 2152, Santa Barbara, California
805-637-1339 | info@FamiliesACT.org
www.FamiliesACT.org

February 28, 2017

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
RE: Agenda Item D-2, February 28, 2017

Honorable Supervisors,

In 2015, Families ACT! proposed the idea to the County of creating a Jail Health Grievance Coordinator. The Board of Supervisors voted to do this. Sheriff Brown hired Lieutenant Mark Mahurin for this position and decided to create a stakeholder's committee to work with the Grievance Coordinator.

Families ACT! and NAMI representatives, among others, serve on this committee, which the Sheriff department named the Community Corrections Input Group. We at Families ACT! have an excellent working relationship with Lt Mahurin and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity to improve the health care provided to our inmates.

Our county is the only one in the state that has such an oversight group and coordinator over jail health. In addition, with the blessing of the Sheriff's department, Families ACT! created a Jail Visitor's Project whereby volunteers staff a table in front of the jail during weekend visitors hours with forms that families members and friends who are visiting can fill out if they have specific concerns related to the health of an inmate.

When Disability Rights California issued their report about the quality of care provided to persons with disabilities in our jail, Corizon Health Corporation made some significant changes in their staffing levels. Nonetheless, there is room for improvement in the quality of mental health, medical and dental care in our County Jail.

Historically California Forensic Medical Group has had its challenges. As a new contract is contemplated, what policies can be put into place to ensure that a jail sentence does not become a death sentence? How can we ensure that an inmate whose condition is potentially life threatening is transported with no delay to the hospital?

The Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness and Public Health departments are not interested in providing mental health and medical services in our jail. It appears that there is no alternative but to rely on private corporations with no ties to our community to do the job.

We hope that any new contractor hired to provide jail health services will work closely with our Grievance Coordinator and our Community Corrections Input Group at the outset to maximize the chances that an inmate will emerge from the jail alive at the end of their sentence.

Thanks you for your attention to this matter,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Riordan", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Suzanne Riordan
Executive Director