



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

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

Agenda Number:

**Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)**

Department Name: County Executive Office
Department No.: 012
Agenda Date: March 10, 2026
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Contact: Tanja Heitman, Assistant County Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Jail Medical Care Feasibility Study

DocuSigned by:

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County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in substantially the same form as Attachment D with the Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA) to provide cost reimbursement for participation in a regional Jail Medical Care Feasibility Study focused on evaluating long-term, sustainable alternatives for jail medical service delivery; and
- b) Determine that the above action is an organizational and administrative activity of government that is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Summary Text:

This letter describes the purpose of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA). Upon approval of the MOU, and approval of MOUs between GSFA and San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties, GSFA will commence a study through contracted consultants to evaluate jail medical costs in the region. The feasibility study is intended to support counties in assessing regional collaboration opportunities, cost-effective service delivery approaches, quality-of-care considerations, and compliance with applicable state and national

standards. The cost for the County's participation is \$146,454.20. Staff will return with a budget revision request to appropriate funds from Tobacco Settlement (TSAC) fund balance, which is available for health-related uses.

Discussion:

Counties throughout California are increasingly challenged by the rising cost and complexity of providing legally required medical care to individuals housed in county jails. Many face persistent staffing shortages, escalating contract and litigation costs, and increasing difficulty maintaining compliance with state and national care standards. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural and mid-sized counties, where limited scale, geographic constraints, and workforce availability create additional barriers to service delivery.

Publicly available data and county experience indicate that contract costs for jail medical services have increased significantly from one contract period to the next, often alongside expanded regulatory requirements and heightened expectations for specialty and behavioral health care.^{1,2,3} At the same time, chronic workforce shortages have contributed to increased reliance on contract-based service models and temporary staffing arrangements, which can create operational instability and additional fiscal pressure.⁴ Limited service partner options amplify the counties' concerns should one partner no longer be available.

In parallel, counties have observed increased litigation and liability exposure related to jail medical care, underscoring the financial and risk management implications of existing delivery models. In discussions with regional working groups, PRISM, a member-directed risk management joint powers authority, noted recent cases involving in-custody deaths and medical care claims that resulted in multimillion-dollar settlement demands and increased county costs.

In response to these shared challenges, the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), in partnership with PRISM, convened five regional task forces in early 2025 composed of County Executive and Administrative Officers (CEOs and CAOs). The purpose of these task forces was to explore long-term strategies for improving the delivery, quality, cost-effectiveness, and risk management of jail medical care, including the potential for regional collaboration.

Following a series of working group meetings with each region, the Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA), RCRC's affiliated public agency, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP No. 2025-GSFA-001) on October 13, 2025. The purpose of the RFP is to procure a qualified consultant, or team of consultants, to conduct a feasibility study evaluating alternative models for jail medical care delivery across five defined regions of California, encompassing a total of 26 participating counties (See EXHIBIT A for a map of participating counties within each region). The feasibility study is intended to support counties in assessing regional collaboration opportunities, cost-effective service delivery approaches, quality-of-care considerations, and compliance with applicable state and national standards (See Exhibit B for list of deliverables to be completed under the contract).

The RFP submission period closed on December 12, 2025, resulting in two qualifying proposals. GSFA conducted an internal evaluation process that included technical scoring and consultation with each

¹ Fresno County Board of Supervisors. (2024, December 3). *Approval of amendment to jail medical services contract* (Agenda Item No. 8). County of Fresno Board of Supervisors meeting agenda.

² Lake County Board of Supervisors. (2025, June 10). *Jail medical services contract and associated cost increases* (Agenda Item No. 5.11). County of Lake Board of Supervisors meeting agenda.

³ Monterey County Board of Supervisors. (2025, November 18). *Update and actions related to jail medical care services* (Agenda Item No. 15). Monterey County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda.

⁴ California State Auditor. (December 2025). *State Health Care Staffing Contracts*.

CAO-led regional working group in early January 2026. Through this process, regional working groups identified preferred consultants to support the feasibility study within their respective regions.

This staff report is provided to support the Board’s consideration of the attached MOU related to participation in the Jail Medical Care Feasibility Study. Through the proposed MOU, the county would partner with the GSFA to fund and participate in a coordinated, data-driven evaluation of long-term jail medical care alternatives alongside similarly situated counties. Under the anticipated structure, GSFA will serve as the contracting entity and program facilitator, convene coordination meetings between county staff and the selected consultant, and act as the fiscal intermediary responsible for processing and paying consultant invoices using funds contributed by participating counties. The feasibility study will be performed exclusively by the selected consultant, and the MOU will become effective only upon execution by all participating counties within the region.

Background:

The costs for participation in the feasibility study are allocated to participating counties based on population. The costs for the Central Coast region are as follows:

Participating Counties	Total County Population (Jan 2025) Pro-Rata Cost Allocation	Percent of Total Project Costs for Designated Region
San Luis Obispo	\$91,494.91	17.96%
Santa Barbara	\$146,454.20	28.75%
Ventura	\$271,533.39	53.30%
Total	\$509,482.00	100%

Below is a map of counties participating in the feasibility study.



The selected consultant will complete a regional feasibility study to evaluate long-term alternatives for jail medical care service delivery. Deliverables will be completed separately for each participating region and will include, at a minimum, the following components:

1. Regional Needs Assessment

- Inventory of current jail medical delivery models across participating counties
- Summary of existing contracts, staffing structures, and operational arrangements
- Assessment of workforce capacity, vacancy pressures, and recruitment challenges
- Continued synthesis of stakeholder input from county administrators, jail leadership, and health staff

2. Comparative Evaluation of Service Delivery Models

- Side-by-side analysis of feasible jail medical care delivery models, including:
 - County-operated (in-house) models
 - Contracted medical services models
 - Regional or shared administrative/governance models (i.e. JPA or shared contracting model)
- Evaluation of each model's operational feasibility, staffing viability, governance complexity, scalability, and alignment with county priorities

3. Performance, Compliance, and Risk Review

- Assessment of each model's ability to meet applicable constitutional, clinical, and regulatory requirements
- Identification of operational, clinical, and liability risks associated with each model
- Analysis of oversight and quality assurance requirements under alternative governance structures

4. Comparative Cost and Fiscal Analysis

- Detailed cost estimates for each model, by county and region
- Identification of major cost drivers, fiscal risks, and sustainability considerations
- Evaluation of potential economies of scale or shared-service efficiencies in the long-run

5. Implementation Roadmap

- Region-specific implementation pathways for feasible models
- Identification of key milestones, sequencing considerations, and decision points
- Overview of recommended governance, staffing, procurement, and administrative actions
- Risk mitigation strategies and readiness considerations

6. Regional Reporting and Presentation

- Stand-alone comprehensive written feasibility report for each region, including:
- Presentation of findings to each regional working group
- Final materials suitable for briefing County Board of Supervisors

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Participation in the feasibility study will be a one-time cost to the County \$146,500, planned to be funded from Tobacco Settlement (TSAC) fund balance reserves. Staff will return to the Board with a budget revision later this fiscal year.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	Total
General Fund				
State				
Federal				
Other - TSAC	\$146,500			\$146,500
Total	\$146,500			\$146,500

Special Instructions:

Please send a copy of the Minute Order to heitman@countyofsb.org. The County Executive Office will return a copy of the final MOU to the Clerk of the Board upon execution.

Attachments:

Attachment A - Jail Medical Feasibility Study_RFP and Addendum

Attachment B - Jail Medical Feasibility Study_HMA

Attachment C - Cost Allocation_Central Coast

Attachment D - Santa Barbara Jail Medical - GSFA-County MOU

Contact Information:

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