

Lenzi, Chelsea

From: Michael Gorodezky <mgorodezky@gmail.com>
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To: Adam, Peter; Lavagnino, Steve; sbcob; Williams, Das; Hartmann, Joan
Subject: Comment on Behavioral Wellness Budget Proposals - April 17, 2017

July 17, 2017

Comments prepared for Board of Supervisors Budget Hearings

Subject: Behavioral Wellness Budget Proposals

I am Dr. Michael Gorodezky. I am past Chair of the Mental Health Advisory Commission and a current member of NAMI. I am speaking as a NAMI member.

I want to recount a bit of history. While I was chairing the commission, at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, Terry Maus-Nisich of the County CEO's office in collaboration with Behavioral Wellness staff, the District Attorney and several other county departments, recommended that Santa Barbara County embark on a pilot Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) effort. All members of the mental health commission unanimously endorsed the pilot program. After some delay, the Board of Supervisors allocated funds for the AOT pilot project and directed the Department of Behavioral Wellness to conduct a 3 year pilot effort.

The project began operation January, 2017. It has been well planned and executed. Community input and participation by all key County Departments and community stakeholders was part of this planning effort. Initial results are very positive. Today, you will hear presentations from family members affected by the AOT pilot.

I want to emphasize one early result. A large number of referrals into the AOT program have been made by Law Enforcement. Law Enforcement needs resources for persons who are mentally ill. The AOT program is

proving to be effective in its outreach efforts for persons who might otherwise be swept up into the criminal system leading to jail.

The Board of Supervisors directed that this pilot be conducted and evaluated with a report back to the Board. I respectfully urge that the Board direct the department of Behavioral wellness to continue the pilot and report back to the Board of Supervisors.

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