



Southern Santa Barbara County

Date: April 6, 2018

To: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

From: NAMI Southern Santa Barbara County

Subject: Recommendation regarding the Sheriff Department's CIT Coordinator Position and CIT Program

The NAMI/MWC Public Policy Committee is concerned about use of force during crisis interventions of law enforcement with persons exhibiting symptoms of mental illness. Without officers schooled in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), these encounters can result in injury, loss of life, and millions in costly law suits.

Nearly half of Santa Barbara County's use of force cases in 2017 involved persons exhibiting symptoms of mental illness. (<https://www.independent.com/news/2018/feb/22/eddie-hsueh-santa-barbaras-great-peace-officer/>)

Since 1988, Crisis Intervention Team Training (CIT) has reduced use of force by law enforcement throughout the county, its basic goal being to enhance public safety by reducing use of force by officers in the field, while redirecting persons with serious mental illness from the judicial system to the health care system.* (<https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Get-Involved/NAMI-National-Convention/2015-Convention-Presentation-Slides-and-Resources/B-7-A-NAMI-CIT-Toolkit.pdf>)

The Sheriff supports the program.

The Sheriff Department's vital CIT program has never been officially funded. It is at risk for lack of funding. Despite the success of the program thus far, with November marking its first (and only) 40-hr. academy, the program is struggling to survive, with a mere six extra help hours funded per week.

We believe it is essential to the success of the Stepping Up Initiative, and the welfare of our community, to preserve and enhance the unfunded CIT program by establishing sustainable funding for the CIT Coordinator's position in 2018-2019 (at an approximate cost of \$130,000), while continuing to pursue funding (of approximately \$220,000 additional per year) for the CIT program.**

We make the following recommendations:

1. Fund a full-time CIT Coordinator's position embedded in the Sheriff's Dept. in 2018-2019.
2. Appoint a Stepping Up Task Force working group, including community stakeholders, to identify and pursue funding for a sustainable CIT program serving law enforcement personnel across the county

In the recent draft report of Santa Barbara County's Sequential Intercept Mapping workshop,*** CIT (including co-response teams, etc.) was cited twelve times as a model core program of the Stepping Up Initiative. Along with Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), CIT is key to diverting persons with mental illness at the Intercept Zero level from criminalization to treatment. A major

recommendation of the SIM consultants was “to continue efforts to build the CIT program, expanding CIT training, coordinating across each of the police entities in the surrounding municipalities, providing 8-hr. de-escalation training to all uniformed officers., and expanding crisis care treatment interventions.”

Reports from families and others throughout our community, including many law enforcement officers, testify to the efficacy of this humane and cost-effective program.

In summary, CIT works. It is a model successfully employed in counties in California and across the nation. The program should not be permitted to lapse. Funding should be supported by all entities that benefit when people with serious mental illness are diverted from criminalization to mental health treatment.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

*Collaboration of CIT-trained officers with Behavioral Wellness Department’s Crisis Action Team has resulted in 142 unserved persons involved in crisis encounters being taken up by the BWD to receive mental health services, per John Winkler, Crisis Services Manager for the BWD.

**Potential sources of funding we know about are AB 109; MHSA; allocations by one or a combination of departments, e.g., Behavioral Wellness, the Sheriff’s Dept., DA, etc.; the General Fund; federal and state grants; and/or future income via the Marijuana initiative. Each entity, while praising the program, claims it has no money and someone else should fund it. Other California counties have combined sources of funding to generate CIT programs. While it is not up to us to say who should fund this program, it is clear to us that CIT should not be permitted to lapse for lack of a single CIT Coordinator’s position. The Stepping Up Initiative will only be successful if stakeholders work together without regard to territoriality.

***Sequential Intercept Model Mapping Report [draft] for Santa Barbara County, CA. Prepared by: Policy Research Associates, Inc. Debra A. Pinals, M.D., Kathleen Kemp, Ph.D., Delmar, NY, November 2017.



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Mental Wellness Center
617 Garden Street Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805)884-8440 NAMI@mentalwellnesscenter.org