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DATE: April 17, 2018

TO: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors - Sheriff Department Budget Hearings

FROM: FAMILIES ACT! Contact: Suzanne Riordan, Executive Director, (805) 637-1339

RE: Funding for Full Time Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) Coordinator Position

Families ACT! is part of a growing coalition of Santa Barbara stakeholder groups who want to see our County step up its efforts to address the epidemic of people with mental health conditions cycling through a costly revolving door cycle of incarcerations due to the lack of adequate mental health services. Crisis Intervention Training for our uniformed officers, which teaches effective and compassionate approaches to de-escalation, is an essential component of in our County's continuum of care. Far too many of our County residents have tragically lost their lives in encounters with law enforcement officers in recent years. We want to ensure that our County will fund a full time CIT Coordinator with the background to advise law enforcement officers responding to a mental health or drug-induced crisis.

Families who have tirelessly sought hospitalization for their loved ones time in a mental health crisis have reported the contrast between the skillful approach of trained responding officers, as compared to that of those who lack the training. As a result, relatively simple situations in which law enforcement is called by parents or neighbors seeking help can lead to a costly and unnecessary booking in the County Jail. More dramatic situations can lead to the tragic death of a person in distress. CIT Training should be an essential component of our County's Stepping Up Initiative. It was one of the key recommendations of the consultants who facilitated the Strategic Mapping Initiative workshop held in Santa Barbara in November 2017. This County cannot afford NOT to fund ongoing training for uniformed officers.

It has been estimated that a full-time CIT Coordinator's position would cost the County approximately \$130K annually. Many sources of funding exist to provide us with this essential element in our County's efforts to stop the costly "revolving door" of incarceration of people with a wide-spectrum of untreated mental health conditions, including the anticipated revenue from Marijuana cultivation in the county.

Another source is the ample AB-109 Realignment funding coming to us annual from the State of California. We propose that this position is of more value to the County than the \$100K the Community Corrections Partnership is proposing to give Community Solutions, Inc., a Connecticut-based corporation to "engage the community" in their deliberations on how to spend the \$13M in annual Realignment funds. In fact, an organic process of engagement in this process is well underway, with dozens of members of the faith community and mental health advocacy community attending sessions of the CCP Workgroup or the Executive Committee meetings.

We trust that you will listen to the concerns of a wide swath of your constituents and find the funding for a CIT Coordinator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rod Pearson".

Rod Pearson
Board Chairman
Families ACT