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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
CLERK OF THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

May 15, 2018

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
105 E. Anapamu
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Supervisors:

We are contacting you regarding our concern about the Behavioral Wellness Department's budget for fiscal 18/19.

We certainly understand the strains on the County's budget resulting from the fires and flooding last winter, and the need to be prudent with available funds. We also know that departments are required to present balanced budgets.

However, the Behavioral Wellness Department's budget requires cuts of \$2.3 million in order to achieve balance. We are concerned that the proposed cutting of board and care beds by over half (40 out of 63) and significant reduction of IMD beds will impact the Department's most critically ill clients.

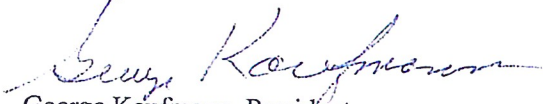
We believe, given the acute shortage of appropriate housing for these people, the intended savings from these cuts will result in the displaced clients experiencing deterioration of their mental health status, homelessness, and requiring more expensive inpatient services and jail.

Before your Board approves these cuts, we suggest that you ask the Behavioral Wellness Department to explain why they are proposing to cut the services that are typically needed by their most at-risk clients, rather than from elsewhere in their \$133 million budget. Also:

1. What is the billing productivity rate for capturing available funds from MediCal and Medicare? Our Department has had a long-standing problem with a low (according to State standards) billing rate for these vital funding sources.
2. Why can't the BWD find cuts further away from acute client services?

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We cannot over-emphasize the serious and more costly problems that these cuts may well produce.

Sincerely,


George Kaufmann, President
NAMI Southern Santa Barbara County

cc: CEO Mona Miyasato, Behavioral Wellness Dept. Director Alice Gleghorn, Clerk of the Board

NAMI Southern Santa Barbara County
c/o Mental Wellness Center, 617 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 805 884 8440