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April 8, 2020

VIA Email: sbcob@co.santa-barbara.ca.us

The Honorable Greg Hart, Chair
and Member of the Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Assisted Outpatient Treatment (“AOT”) aka Laura’s Law
Please Read at County Budget Workshops/Dept of Behavioral Wellness’s Presentation

Dear Chair Hart and Supervisors:

I am writing in support of Santa Barbara County’s Pilot AOT program, which provides community-based mental health treatment to keep persons actively engaged in treatment, both voluntary and mandated. AOT is the only mandated outpatient treatment available without a person being arrested and criminalized before they can get effective treatment for their mental illness.

The AOT pilot program is recognized as having an impact on reducing incarcerations, crisis events and psychiatric hospitalizations. It is also an essential component in our County’s program to reduce incarceration, such as Stepping Up.

The County’s AOT program, which was established as a three year pilot program, concludes in December 2020. I ask you, our County Board of Supervisors, to take critical action now to ensure the continuation of this very necessary and successful program in our County, now and into the future. As you review the County’s budgets, please ensure sufficient funding for the continuation of the AOT Program. Your support will continue the efforts for diverting individuals from arrest and criminalization and break the cycle of mental health crisis with AOT.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

JOYCE DUDLEY
District Attorney

cc: Lynn Gibbs
Tracy Macuga

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