



# Annual Report of Wellpath Services for the Santa Barbara County Juvenile Detention Facilities

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**2019-2020**





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Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and Chief Probation Officer Heitman,

California Forensic Medical Group, a Wellpath company, and I have remained committed to providing exemplary and professional care to every patient entrusted to us by Santa Barbara County for the last three years. I continue to be incredibly humbled and grateful for the opportunity to serve our community in the role of Health Services Administrator in our Detention Facilities. It is my honor and privilege to present to you our Annual Report of Services, which includes the many successes that we have had throughout 2019 and 2020. It once again highlights the dedication and commitment to excellence of this team.

Year three was one that focused on growth and expansion for Wellpath in Santa Barbara. We established an expanded leadership team that was instrumental in many of our successes throughout the year. We successfully negotiated a new contract with the Sheriff's Office and Probation to include an expansion of services and a new facility.

As we end our third year, I cannot help but take a moment to reflect on and appreciate our journey thus far. Despite the challenges, roadblocks, adversity and uncertainty we have faced together I take pride in the team we have collectively built and in the community that we serve. Positive and flourishing relationships, enthusiastic leaders, and engaged community members make me feel confident that we will achieve continued success in 2020 and beyond. We would not be where we are today without these strong partnerships.

We will continue to grow and collaborate with our county partners in the coming year to come up with solutions to the challenges that we all face for the betterment of our mutual clients/patients and our community. We look forward to continuing to provide services to Santa Barbara County for many years to come.

Respectfully,

Amber Nunes, RN, BSN, CCHP  
Health Services Administrator

## On-Site Medical Care

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Youth in custody have timely access to quality medical care. Patients request medical services via sick call slips, which are collected and triaged at least **twice daily** by medical nursing staff at each site. The juvenile sites do not have 24 hours nursing services so an on-call physician is available by phone for medical issues when nursing is not on-site.

During contract year-three, on-site nursing staff completed **5,340** clinic visits at Santa Maria Juvenile Hall (SMJH) and **1,505** clinic visits at Los Prietos Boys Camp (LPBC), which comprised of sick visits, immunizations and lab services. In addition to the nursing visits, **1,009** medical clinic visits were completed by our pediatrician at SMJH and **279** at LPBC. This includes **239** Comprehensive Well Child Visits, **239** interval exams, **521** sick visits and **163** chronic care visits at SMJH. At LPBC, **11** Annual Well Child Visits, **177** sick visits and **91** chronic care visits were conducted by our physician. All youth are seen by the on-site pediatrician within **96 hours** of intake and youth with chronic conditions are seen monthly. The most common chronic care conditions seen by our clinician are asthma, obesity and diabetes.

Like most adolescents in the juvenile justice system, many incarcerated youth have not accessed medical care in the community in years. While some chronic conditions can be well-established or emerge in adolescence, the majority of adolescents are physically healthy. However, developmental and psychosocial health issues tend to be more prevalent in the adolescent population and more pronounced in incarcerated youth. Areas of particular concern for our youth include dental issues, high risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), substance use disorders, mental health issues including the impacts of childhood trauma, and not being up to date on their immunizations.

While dental services are not provided on-site, full dental services are provided off-site and are addressed in detail in the Off-site Medical Care section.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), youth aged 15-24 years are known to have the highest rates of STIs and are also more likely to have no symptoms when infected as compared to adults. All youth are offered STI testing upon intake into the juvenile facilities. During their initial and annual Comprehensive Well Child Visit, youth are tested for HIV, chlamydia and gonorrhea and t. pallidum, though most youth decline t. pallidum because it requires a blood draw. At every intake youth are offered comprehensive STI testing. In contract year-three, **54 (10%)** youth incarcerated were treated for STIs most commonly chlamydia. Health staff spend a lot of time educating youth on STIs, risk reduction for STIs and access to care within the community. Education around confidentiality is emphasized as most youth are unaware that sexual health services are confidential for ages 12 and older in California. All females are tested for pregnancy at intake and offered family planning services including emergency contraception. Wellpath works with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (SBCPHD) in dealing with youth who have recurrent positive tests for STIs to aid in interventions and treatment of partners. Wellpath staff look forward to partnering with Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley who was recently awarded a grant from SBCPHD to provide sexual health educational/interventional services for in-custody youth.

Youth are also offered needed vaccinations during incarceration. The juvenile sites offer all immunizations recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices including an annual influenza vaccine. Vaccines are provided for free through the Vaccine for Children's immunization program managed by the California Department of Public Health. There were **307** immunizations administered at the juvenile sites in contract year-three.

All youth entering the facility are screened for mental health and substance use disorders as youth in corrections are disproportionately affected. All Wellpath staff are trained twice yearly on Suicide Prevention and participate in ongoing training for substance use and mental health disorders in adolescents. There is an abundance of research that shows that addiction is a pediatric onset disorder and that youth in corrections have higher rates of substance use disorders. The majority of youth entering the detention facility in year three had an identified substance use disorder. The most common psychoactive substances used among incarcerated youth is cannabis with a noticeable increase in youth using concentrated cannabis products such as wax pens. After cannabis, alcohol, prescription medications (most commonly Xanax) and psychostimulants were the most commonly

used substances. Youth identified as being at risk for withdrawal are appropriately monitored with detoxification protocols based on American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) guidelines. There have been no overdoses requiring Narcan within the facility in contract year-three or previously. Wellpath works with Behavioral Wellness to ensure referrals for community treatment are completed though improvement in this process is a goal for year four. Wellpath staff also provide education to youth and correctional staff on the most commonly abused drugs, effects of substances on adolescent brain and addiction risk, signs and symptoms of withdrawal and medication-assisted treatment (MAT) options. Youth eligible for MAT are seen by both our Board Certified Addiction Medicine Pediatrician and our psychiatrist and involves obtaining informed consent from both the youth and their parent/guardian. Community follow-up and aftercare most often occurs with a Behavioral Wellness psychiatrist as there are limited community addiction medicine specialists treating adolescents, especially in the North County region. During contract year-three, there were three youth eligible for MAT. Two started MAT and one declined to initiate the therapy after discussing options with the physician and psychiatrist.

In addition to providing care to our patients with chronic and acute medical issues, Wellpath also provides emergency services. There were **two** medical emergency responses within the facility with no adverse outcomes or hospitalizations. While we have been lucky to have few medical emergencies within juvenile facilities, our staff are continually preparing for such an event. Wellpath, in conjunction with Probation staff, conduct emergency drills every other month on different scenarios to familiarize Probation staff with emergency procedures and first aid. We also conducted our annual disaster drills at each site. SMJH conducted a facility-wide active shooter drill and LPBC had a facility-wide earthquake drill. As a result of the drill debriefings, corrective actions for quality improvement were taken to better account for on-site staff, how to communicate with law enforcement and first responders, and designating responsibility for notification of emergency services.

## Off-site Medical Care

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There are no specialty services provided on-site at the juvenile facilities. Off-site care is provided by specialists who are contracted directly with the Probation department.

There were **294** off-site specialty appointments at SMJH (**168**) and LPBC (**126**) with dental appointments accounting for **73%** of all off-site appointments. The number of dental appointments increased significantly in 2019 due to National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) guidelines which require that all youth see a dentist within 60 days of incarceration and that oral treatment be provided according to a treatment plan based on a system of established priorities for care. Due to this significant increase of dental appointments, Wellpath and Probation initiated conversations with the North County dental provider, Community Health Centers (CHC) Dental, on the possibility of contracting for on-site dental services using CHC's mobile dental unit. These negotiations are continuing but have been delayed due to COVID-19 response. After dental appointments, the most common off-site appointments were optometry and orthopedics.

There were **21** x-rays done at Marian Plaza Radiology during the contract year. Chest and hand x-rays were the most common x-ray type. There were **556** labs collected on-site and processed through the SBCPHD clinical and public health lab. There were **10** Emergency room visits, **eight** from SMJH and **two** from LPBC, and **three** outpatient surgeries. There was **one** hospitalization for monitoring after a surgery at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

## Risk Management

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There was no writs or adverse medical events at the juvenile facilities.

There were no medical grievances during contract year-three. Youth are informed of the grievance process at

intake. If a youth submits a medical grievance, it is given to the Health Services Administrator or designee who investigates the grievance immediately and gives an initial response within two days. If the youth is not satisfied with the response, the youth may utilize the facility's grievance appeal process.

## In-Custody Deaths

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In contract year-three, there were no in-custody deaths.

## Suicides

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Wellpath responded to **one** suicide attempt in contract year-three. Upon arrival of medical staff, the youth was awake and oriented. Nursing monitored the youth until transportation by ambulance to Marian Regional Medical Center for evaluation. Ultimately, there were no injuries requiring hospitalization and the Behavioral Wellness Crisis team determined the youth did not meet criteria for a WIC §5585 hold, resulting in the youth's return to SMJH within 12 hours. The youth was subsequently monitored and counseled using suicide prevention guidelines.

## Pharmaceutical Services

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Wellpath is in our second year of partnering with CorrectRx Pharmacy to provide pharmaceutical services. CorrectRx continues to be recognized as one of the nation's leading correctional pharmacy services providers. Each medication that is ordered is reviewed by our assigned team of clinical pharmacists to ensure each patient's safety. Medications are reviewed for cost saving alternatives and the pharmacists work with the providers to determine the best course of therapies for our patients. Wellpath and Behavioral Wellness follow the Wellpath and Medi-Cal formulary to ensure youth are continued on their medications at intake without delay.

There were over **37,781** doses of medication administered during the year by nursing or delivered by health trained Probation staff when medical is not on-site. SMJH has an average daily population of **42** youth in custody. At least once during the month, **28%** of youth took mental health medications, **38%** a prescription medication (non-mental health) and **85%** an over the counter medication (OTC). At LPBC, the average daily population was 18 youth in custody. At least once during the month, **28%** of youth took a mental health medication, **43%** a prescription medications (non-mental health), and **85%** an OTC medication. The most common OTC medications include benzoyl peroxide for acne, Eucerin cream and allergy medication. The most common non-mental health prescription medications were acne medications, asthma/allergy medications and antibiotics.

In an effort to ensure medications are properly administered, Wellpath tracks missed medications at both facilities and breaks them down into three categories; missed essential medications, missed medications, and refused meds. An essential medication includes chronic care medications (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, autoimmune, oncology, etc.) as well as medications for serious mental illness. All others are considered medications [non-essential] and include miscellaneous prescriptions and over the counter medications. Each month, the Wellpath Facility Coordinator conducts a monthly medication count where the number of meds ordered are compared to number ordered and any missing or refused medication is researched and addressed through a corrective action plan (CAP). In 2020, Wellpath will further break out refused medication by essential and non-essential categories.

During contract year-three, Wellpath focused on the re-training of staff (including Probation Health Care Liaisons) on proper documentation which has greatly reduced the number of documentation errors designated as a missed medication in the last quarter of the contract year.

Wellpath continues to have quarterly pharmacy inspections conducted by a contracted local Pharmacist. There were not any deficiencies noted for contract year-three.

## National Commission on Correctional Healthcare

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Our third year was spent preparing for our NCCHC inspection. Working in collaboration with Probation on all aspects of the accreditation, and with Behavioral Wellness as it applies to mental health services, in late February, Wellpath Santa Barbara had a final self-audit by our Accreditation and Compliance department to give the green light on completing our official survey. We were given the departments blessing and were looking forward to this accomplishment. Our application was submitted July 9, 2019 and the juvenile sites were waiting for an audit date from NCCHC. Due to the unforeseen circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of our Pandemic Response Plan, we unfortunately had to close our doors to all outside agencies for the safety of our patients. NCCHC suspended accreditation visits as well. We just heard from NCCHC that they are scheduling audits again. They have sent out emails to their auditors to start coordinating dates with facilities needing to be audited, so we will be working closely with NCCHC to schedule an accreditation audit as soon as possible and will be sure to update the Board of Supervisors as soon as a date is scheduled.

The Santa Barbara Juvenile Detention Facilities have maintained the Institute of Medical Quality's Correction accreditation for over 15 years and has repeatedly been described by IMQ as a facility that provides care above the community standard. In October of 2018, we received a full two-year accreditation so we continue to have correctional healthcare accreditation until October 30, 2020. In December 2019, we learned IMQ would stop providing accreditation services, so no future IMQ accreditations will be possible. Consequently, NCCHC will become the primary source of accreditation. It is expected we will complete our NCCHC accreditation by that time so no lapse in accreditation occurs.

In June of 2019 there was a companywide initiative that updated and revised our policies and procedures. Our policies were updated to reflect recent changes in legislature and a merger of two of our legacy companies' best practices. Santa Barbara County has updated our policies to reflect site specific processes as well. Our policies will be revised and updated on an annual basis.

## Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

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Wellpath has an extensive corporate CQI program and locally our juvenile sites complete many in-house juvenile specific quality improvement activities. For contract year-three, our focus was in activities surrounding NCCHC standard compliance. Audits were conducted just prior to the start of contract year-three in March 2019 on site policies and procedures to ensure we met all of the NCCHC compliance indicators. Of these audits, we had deficiencies in 19 of the 70 NCCHC standards. Most of these deficiencies were easily fixable such as gathering the proper documentation, signatures documenting annual reviews, etc.

Corrective action plans were developed for each deficiency which resulted in new practices. The major changes revolved around the receiving screening process, health training for Probation staff, the creation of Health Care Liaisons (Probation staff), mental health assessments and monitoring youth in segregation. Most actions involved creating procedures for improved documentation of communication between Probation, Wellpath and Behavioral

Wellness. Re-audits of these procedures showed significant improvements.

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department conducts quarterly audits of our contractual Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Wellpath is to maintain an overall compliance rate of 90%. If we fall below 90% on any question, we are required to complete a CAP for just that one question. While the fourth quarter audit has been delayed by SBCPHD due to the COVID-19 pandemic, quarters one through three show an overall compliance rate of 96% for each of the quarters. One area was deficient and did not meet the 90% threshold, which involved bringing youth's vaccinations up to date by day 14. However, these numbers are artificially low as they include youth who refuse vaccinations, their parents refuse the vaccination, or in circumstances where obtaining parental consent was difficult. While we look to improve tracking data and account for the reasons youth did not receive a vaccination, in contract year four we plan to change the wording of this particular SLA to exclude youth who either decline the immunization or the parents refuse to give consent for immunizations.

## Year Four Goals

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Wellpath's goals for contract year four include:

1. Obtaining NCCHC accreditation;
2. Better coordination of care between agencies involving youth with substance use disorders;
3. Enhanced procedures involving Medication-Assisted Treatment for youth;
4. Implement a Sexual Health curriculum in conjunction with local non-profit; and
5. Continued health training of Wellpath and Probation staff around adolescent physical and mental health issues.

## Services Report

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- Santa Maria Juvenile Hall Pharmaceutical Statistics (Attachment B)
- Los Prietos Boys Camp Pharmaceutical Statistics (Attachment C)
- SBCPHD Service Level Agreements Quarterly Audits Summary (Attachment D)
- Response to COVID-19 for Probation's Juvenile Detention Facilities (Attachment E)



