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Re: Sixth Expert Monitoring Report on the Consent Decree
Babu et al. v. County of Alameda et al.
Case No. 5:18-CV-07677

Dear Counsel,

This letter serves to introduce my sixth monitoring report on the status of the Alameda County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) and Adult Forensic Behavioral Health's (AFBH) implementation of the Consent Decree (CD) within the Santa Rita Jail (SRJ). This report addresses all provisions currently assigned to me for review and rating as the Mental Health Expert. The period for this report covers information received and reviewed from September 1st through December 31st, 2024. In preparing this report, as in the past, I've obtained feedback from the other Joint Experts and provided feedback on their individual reports.

The most recent site visit of the court-appointed Experts took place from December 2nd through December 4th, 2024. The Joint Expert team was joined by Defense Counsel, Class Counsel, and representatives from the Department of Justice for discussions related to the implementation of the CD with the Sheriff, County Behavioral Health, and Wellpath leadership. As in prior tours, I had the opportunity to assess operations as I toured the facility, spoke with staff, observed meetings on the Therapeutic Housing Units, attended a Restrictive Housing Committee meeting, an all-staff meeting of AFBH and other meetings of select staff.

For this report, the County has continued to provide access to information and a range of documentation necessary for my evaluation of their progress and compliance with provisions. I am pleased to note that proof of compliance data has increased during this reporting period. Additional requirements to support compliance are specified in the attached report.

Definite sustained improvements have been noted during this rating period which have resulted in a few changes in Provision ratings. Improvements include:

- Consistency in the application of telehealth services,
- Further improvement in addressing Restrictive Housing for persons with mental illness,
- Continued implementation and refinement of the Therapeutic Housing Unit (THU) model with dedicated teams in four housing units,
- Continued implementation and refinement of the mental health “Level of Care” (LOC) system applied to all persons incarcerated at the SRJ with ongoing training of staff, and confluence between the LOC and the THU models,
- Consistency in the intake process for all persons during the SRJ “booking,” and
- Continued efforts to manage and handle persons at-risk of suicide in a therapeutic manner.

Areas for attention include:

- Continued efforts to increase staffing as required by the CD,
- Continued efforts to develop and obtain approval of policies and procedures, with related forms and documentation requirements, for implementation and “Substantial Compliance,”
- Continued development of the behavioral health continuum of care beginning at intake through release with adequate staffing and available housing at the appropriate levels of care,
- Continued implementation of Therapeutic Housing Units, with a true collaboration of clinical and custody personnel, which includes effective in-custody programming reinforced by reentry and discharge supports,
- Availability of community-based resources within the SRJ providing much-needed services in substance use and “re-entry” services,
- Adequate and timely physical plant renovations to support clinical activity and the development of a therapeutic environment, and
- Ability for AFBH and ACSO to conduct meaningful reviews of both individual critical incidents and overall trends in all provision areas to address issues and situations that contribute to negative outcomes and non-compliance with the CD.

As has been my experience throughout this monitoring process, this report reflects the openness and willingness shown by the County, AFBH and ACSO to implement the provisions of the CD. In the areas assigned to me, this rating period demonstrates the attention being paid by the County to the critical changes and improvements that must be made.

I look forward to the continued collaboration, engagement, and willingness by all parties to implement new ideas and strategies. The notable improvements in operations and movement towards CD compliance shown during this rating period demonstrate the shared interest in making changes and seeking sustainable reforms.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment