

**RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT**

**Report Title:** "Guardians before warriors: Humboldt County law enforcement training."

**Report Date:** June 30, 2016

**Response by:** Connie Beck, Director of Department of Health and Human Services



**FINDINGS**

- We partially disagree with the findings numbered: F1
- We agree with the findings numbered: F2

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Recommendation numbered R1 is currently in the process of being implemented.

**Response to Findings and Recommendations from the Grand Jury Report**

**FINDINGS (F1, F2)**

**F1.** The four-day CIT program takes officers out of the field for a significant period of time and may leave smaller agencies too short staffed to be effective in their communities.

**Response:** Partially disagree

The department agrees that a four-day training takes officers out of the field for a significant length of time. We disagree with the implicit finding that this training model is flawed because the mandatory trainings may leave smaller law enforcement agencies too short staffed to be effective in their communities. The Department of Health & Human Services is committed to staggering the trainings to prevent or reduce staffing shortages; the committee creating the training is determined to allow the content dictate the time needed.

The amount of time encompassed by this training reflects the breadth and depth of the curriculum. In addition to didactic presentations and appearances by community stakeholders, giving information about community resources, time is spent on role plays and debriefing the interactions brought out in them.

The Department of Health & Human Services believes that allowing the content to dictate the length of the training is the most appropriate way to determine the duration of the training. Decreasing the amount of contact time among participants would lead to a diminishing return on one of the most important goals of this training, which is the building of relationships between members of otherwise distinct cultures across Law Enforcement, Mental Health and other community stakeholders which includes clients and client families.

**F2.** Repeated turnover of staff within the Mental Health Branch of the Department of Health and Human Services has negatively impacted their ability to offer the local CIT program.

**Response:** Agree.

Mental Health Branch staffing shortages-especially nursing in 24 Hour and Crisis Stabilization Unit has made it very difficult to staff Sempervirens Hospital and the Crisis Stabilization Unit while allowing front line staff to attend and participate in CIT training.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS (R1)**

**R1.** The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that County law enforcement agencies work with mental illness stakeholders (clients, families and advocates) and the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services to create and offer consistent, comprehensive, relevant and culturally-sensitive crisis intervention and de-escalation training program.

**Response:** The Department is currently in the process of implementing this recommendation.

When the Community Corrections Partnership Executive Committee was informed of the postponement of the May 2016 CIT training, they funded a seven-person team to go to the International Crisis Intervention Team conference in Chicago in April 2016. This team consisted of Heidi Holmquist, from the Public Defender's Office, Tim Ash, of NAMI Humboldt, Sergeant Martin Abshire, of the California Highway Patrol, Sergeant Michael Fridley of the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department, Mark Lamers, PhD, Kelly Johnson, MFT, and Donna Wheeler, LCSW, of the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services. At the convention, the attendees from Humboldt attended multiple presentations on how to best plan and present community based CIT trainings.

Upon returning from Chicago, this team formed an advisory committee that has met several times to critically assess past CIT trainings and collaborate to plan our next CIT training. The advisory committee included participation from Pamlyn Milsap, currently Homeless Liason officer at EPD, Lea Nagy, of NAMI Humboldt and retired HSU Police Chief Lynn Soderburg. The training is scheduled to take place the week of November 28th, 2016. The CIT advisory committee recognizes the issues, which contributed to obstacles in participating for Mental Health, local law enforcement and other community stakeholders, and we are actively seeking to address these issues.