



COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL – DOWNTOWN OFFICE

700 H Street, Suite 2650, Sacramento, California 95814 Telephone (916) 874-5544 Facsimile (916) 874-8207

September 22, 2023

COUNTY COUNSEL
Lisa A. Travis

ASSISTANT COUNTY COUNSEL
Jennifer McLaren
Janice M. Snyder

SUPERVISING DEPUTY
COUNTY COUNSEL
Christopher S. Costa
Katherine Ann Covert
Rick Heyer
Katrina G. Nelson
June R. Powells-Mays
John E. Reed
Tina M. Roberts
Lindsay C. Zettel

DEPUTY COUNTY COUNSEL
Danielle Abildgaard
Janet E. Bender
Corrie Brite
William C. Burke
Jennifer A. Cerri
Andrew S. Crouse
Michelle M. Espy
Keith W. Floyd
Laura Froome
Shilpa M. Girimaji
Christophe Guillon
Eric Handler
Jeff Harry
Julia R. Jackson
Kelsey D. Johnson
Michael J. Keene
Jocelynn J. Maier
Jason A. Manooogian
Susan R. Masarweh
Amanda McDermott
Diane E. McElhern
Deon C. Merene
C. Stacey Miller
Nicole M. Misner
Lura L. O'Brien
Robert P. Parrish
Nanci A. Porter
Joy A. Ramos
Andy Read
Monica Robinson
Nicole L. Roman
Blake P. Sequeira
Lindsey N. Severi
Michelle Shaffie
Rachelle Smith
Samantha Tali
Kitty L. Tetrault
Ashley M. Wisniewski
James R. Wood
Peter C. Zilaff

Margot Mendelson
Prison Law Office
mmendelson@prisonlaw.com

Re: Response to August 25, 2023 Letter

Dear Ms. Mendelson:

I write to you regarding your letter to Ann Edwards and Eric Jones sent on August 25, 2023. In that letter, you expressed your understanding that the County was not going to pursue the expansion of the acute mental health unit within the Main Jail.

As you are aware, the County Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the expansion of the acute mental health unit (2P) on December 8, 2022. This action specifically approved repurposing part of the third floor of the Main Jail and creating a new acute unit on that floor. This proposed unit would be known as 3P. The 3P unit would expand the number of acute mental health beds from 17 to 36 beds. To achieve this expansion, there would first need to be facility improvement at the Rio Consumnes Correctional Center (RCCC) to house the inmates displaced by the construction at the Main Jail. The Board approved that project as well.

These two projects were considered the interim measures necessary to provide some relief to the population of the County jails with acute mental health needs while the County moves forward with the construction of the Annex to the Main Jail. The reason that this plan was put forth by staff at that time, instead of finding treatment at a facility or facilities outside the jail, was because it was thought to be a quicker solution to realize, be more efficient on staffing, would not require construction of any additional space outside of the jails and would not reduce the number of beds in the community.

After the Board approved this plan, County staff began the work necessary to issue an RFP for firms to bid on the design and construction of the 3P and RCCC projects. The County issued this RFP in the spring of 2023. The vendor with the winning bid informed staff in August that the projected completion date for the 3P project is January of 2027. Upon learning this date, staff immediately began the work to find a community-based alternative to the 3P project.

The reason staff began looking for a community-based alternative to the 3P project is that the County will not wait until 2027 to expand acute mental health beds available to County jail inmates. If the County cannot add additional beds inside the jails, the only alternative is to utilize beds outside of the jails. To that end, the staff from Adult Correctional Health, Jail Psychiatric Services, Behavioral Health, and the Sheriff's Office have toured the County Mental Health Treatment Center. The County has also discussed the possibility of moving County inmates to private providers in the community and has toured several private facilities to locate an appropriate location for this care. To date, no provider or location has been chosen. The challenges with finding the right space remain the same challenges that drove the County to consider the 3P project in the first place. The County must find a location that is secure. Every facility toured to date will require some construction to achieve the appropriate level of security, and some facilities that have been toured are not feasible to secure. In addition, use of any facility outside the jails will create the need to add staff on top of what is already in existence inside the jails. The County is also trying to locate a facility that can take acute inmates from the jails without significantly reducing the number of beds available to the community at large.

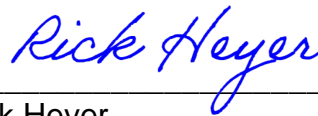
Because of the obstacles described above, the County cannot say that a location and service provider has been chosen at this time. However, the County is committed to placing a portion of the jail population with acute mental health needs in a treatment facility outside of the jails and is diligently working to locate the best facility. The County will provide you monthly updates on this search and of course inform you when a location and provider has been chosen.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter in more detail.

Sincerely,

LISA A. TRAVIS
County Counsel

By: _____



Rick Heyer
Supervising Deputy County Counsel

cc: Ann Edwards
Eric Jones
Chevon Kothari
Jim Cooper
Aaron Fischer
Patrick Booth