



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

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POLICE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT HANDY
Chief of Police

August 6, 2015

Honorable Glenda Sanders
Presiding Judge of the Orange County Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, Ca. 92701

Dear Judge Sanders:

Contained herein is my response to the findings and recommendations contained within the 2015 Orange County Grand Jury report titled, *"The Mental Illness Revolving Door: A Problem for Police, Hospitals, and the Health Care Agency"* pursuant to Penal Code 933.05(a) and (b).

Findings

- F1. I am in agreement with the conclusion contained within this report that more law enforcement training is needed in dealing with the mentally ill.
- F2. I am in agreement with the conclusion contained within this report that law enforcement officers receive insufficient training regarding Laura's Law.

Recommendations

R1. Although training is a necessary and effective way to deal with the issue, I do not agree with the recommendation that "all law enforcement officers should receive at least 40 hours of comprehensive Crisis Intervention Training..."

Huntington Beach police officers received, on average, 19 hours of Crisis Intervention Training in the last year. All first responders attended the POST certified school "Crisis Intervention Training for Law Enforcement-Understanding Mental Illness on the Street" and also received training from the five (5) 30 minute DVD's produced by the Orange Police Department and Santa Ana Police Department discussed in the report.

While training can always be improved, Huntington Beach officers are well equipped to deal with mental illness as they encounter it. I would rather see a quality class of undetermined length, much like the 16 hour "Crisis Intervention Training for Law Enforcement-Understanding Mental Illness on the Street" be utilized with bi-annual refresher courses, as opposed to picking a set amount of hours and building a curriculum around the length of instruction. Training time is crucial to putting quality officers into the community but must also be balanced with time on the street protecting our residents. The slow creep of "mandatory" training is making it more and more difficult to properly staff the Department and police the City.

As a beach community we have a large population base of homeless and have found that many of them suffer from differing degrees of mental illness. It is my intention to continue to have Huntington Beach officers take mental illness seriously and will encourage not only training but "train the trainer" type of relations. We have a number of in-house police officer experts who provide on-going training in this area. Mandated training tends to be generic and not specific enough to meet our needs. The majority of our training is above and outside the scope of mandated training. I believe this is a more effective use of our time and resources and ultimately provides a better trained police officer for our community.

R2. I am in agreement with this recommendation.

I would like to thank the Orange County Grand Jury for their work on behalf of the citizens of the community and for allowing me an opportunity to respond to the recommendations listed in the Grand Jury report.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,


Robert Handy
Chief of Police

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