



# CITY OF COSTA MESA

CALIFORNIA 92628-1200

P.O. BOX 1200

---

FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

November 1, 2015

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

On behalf of the City of Costa Mesa Police Department, please refer to the responses to the Findings and Recommendations for the Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled, "*Mental Illness Revolving Door: A Problem for Police, Hospitals, and the Health Care Agency.*"

#### Responses to Findings:

- 1) F.1. – *Deputy Sheriffs and Police Officers receive insufficient training on how to evaluate and handle the mentally ill in the field.*

The respondent agrees with the finding. The Costa Mesa Police Department utilizes the Orange County Sheriff's Academy, which provides 21 hours of mental health training in the basic academy. That training is introductory and periodic refresher training should be required to keep maintain proficiency and understanding. At this time, any additional mental health training being provided by agencies is at the discretion of those individual agencies. To be proactive, Costa Mesa Police Department recently started to provide additional training to its sworn staff through Golden West College's 24-hour Crisis Intervention Course (CIT).

- 2) F.2. – *Deputy Sheriffs and Police Officers receive insufficient training regarding Laura's Law.*

The respondent agrees with the finding. There has been no formal training provided by the county on the application of Laura's Law. Providing training on Laura's law to all first responders will allow for public safety agencies to better address the issues they face every day.

#### Responses to Recommendations:

- 1) R.1. – *All law enforcement officers should receive at least 40 hours of comprehensive Crisis Intervention Training on how to handle and evaluate the mentally ill in the field with periodic refresher training.*

The recommendation has been implemented. Mandating 40 hours of Crisis Intervention Training would be a considerable start to effectively deal with the perceived rise in mentally ill. As of early 2015, the Costa Mesa Police Department began sending officers through Golden West College's 24-hour Crisis Intervention Course (CIT). As staffing allows, the department anticipates incrementally sending those same officers through the follow-up 16-hour CIT II course.

- 2) R.2. – *All law enforcement officers should receive mandatory and specific training regarding Laura's law.*

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Mandated training on Laura's Law would increase the level of training across the county and ensure accountability and consistency of training. In the interim, the Costa Mesa Police Department will explore training opportunities, to include reoccurring briefing training and reference handouts.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Sharpnack', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Sharpnack  
Chief of Police  
Costa Mesa Police Department