



CITY OF GARDEN GROVE POLICE DEPARTMENT

A NATIONALLY
ACCREDITED LAW
ENFORCEMENT
AGENCY

TODD D. ELGIN
CHIEF OF POLICE

November 24, 2015

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

Dear Honorable Glenda Sanders:

I have reviewed the 2015-2016 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "The Mental Illness Revolving Door: A Problem for Police, Hospitals, and The Health Care Agency." The investigation of Mental Illness is of concern to our police department, our community, and society as a whole. After much deliberation and study with my command staff of the findings and recommendations set forth by the Grand Jury, I am pleased to forward to you my responses.

FINDINGS

- F-1 Deputy Sheriffs and police officers receive insufficient training on how to evaluate and handle the mentally ill in the field.

RESPONSE

The Garden Grove Police Department agrees that there is always room for improvement when handling incidents with Mental Illness, especially, in light of the drastic increase for calls for service regarding the mental ill.

In 2013, the Garden Grove Police Department complied with the POST "Mental Health Update" training by having all sworn officers and sergeants watch the 40 minute video.

Also, the Garden Grove Police Department is one of the cities that has a part-time, 15-hour a week, Psychiatric Evaluation Response Team (PERT) clinician from Orange County Mental Health that rides with our patrol officers to assist with real time mental health calls for service. The PERT clinician has been valuable helping assess, in real time, the need to give accurate evaluation of persons with mental illness and proper placement if necessary. PERT clinicians are assigned follow-up cases specific to Garden Grove residents which benefits the mental health cases related directly to law enforcement. The PERT clinician handled the calls for service related to mental health as they are dispatched with the officer while they are on-duty.

FINDINGS

- F-2 Deputy Sheriffs and police officers receive insufficient training regarding Laura's Law.

RESPONSE

I agree there has been insufficient training regarding Laura's Law. There have been no official bulletins from the County of Orange to the Garden Grove Police Department regarding training for sworn officers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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.

RESPONSE

The Garden Grove Police Department is aware of the importance of training officers in Mental Health and had been sending officers to the 16-hour Crisis Intervention Training I course since 2014. We have sent a Sergeant, who oversees the Homeless Liaison Officer (HLO) program, to the 24-hour Crisis Intervention Training II course and we will be sending four newly appointed HLO's to the 24-hour course. We have consistently been sending sworn officers and plan on having all sworn officers and sergeants trained in the next 24-months. A 40-hour course would be extremely difficult to send all the officers to a course of this length for staffing reasons.

An additional PERT clinician or a full-time clinician would be invaluable to assist the Garden Grove Police Department with providing proper handling of the Mentally Illness problem for law enforcement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

RESPONSE

Currently, no training exists for sworn officers at the Garden Grove Police Department regarding the guidelines for Laura's Law.

Sincerely,



Todd D. Elgin
Chief of Police