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August 5, 2013

Honorable Thomas J. Borris
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Judge Borris,

The Placentia Police Department has received the Orange County Grand Jury Report, "To Protect and To Serve: A Look at Tools to Assist Law Enforcement in Achieving Positive Outcomes with the Homeless Mentally Ill." The Department is pleased to form a partnership with the Grand Jury in an effort to increase positive outcomes with the homeless mentally ill. I have reviewed the findings and recommendations made by the Grand Jury and offer the following for your consideration:

Finding F1: Although POST requires continuing education in the area of dealing with individuals who are mentally ill, it does not specify the number of hours or frequency of officer training; nor does it require that such training be documented.

Finding F2: Field Officers desire more in-depth training in dealing with the mentally ill on the street.

Finding F3: There is one officer-in a very few instances two officers-for every one-thousand (1,000) citizens in a given city within the County who are expected to deal with the full range of law enforcement issues of that city.

Finding F4: Nationally accredited police departments police less than 10% of Orange County cities.

Finding F5: Not all Orange County cities have at least one officer trained in Crisis Intervention.

Finding F6: There is a broad spectrum of on-going training provided to patrol officers in order to develop their abilities and strategies in dealing with the mentally ill. Some departments provide minimal training; others have comprehensive programs in place.

Finding F7: Five departments have their patrol officers ride periodically with the homeless liaison officer. Seventeen do not.

Finding F8: Departments are reaching out-or beginning to reach out-to neighboring departments and to other skilled professionals, both in dialogue about the mentally ill and homeless issues in their cities, and to learn more effective strategies in dealing with these individuals.

Finding F9: All police departments believe that on-going training should be supported by Mental Health Services Act Funding.

Finding F10: All police departments adhere to written policy, procedure, and/or protocol regarding contact with mentally ill persons.

F11: Policy and lawmakers in the County of Orange continue to examine Laura's Law in light of its potential impact on the mentally ill and all citizens for positive outcomes.

The Placentia Police Department accepts the findings and agrees there is a need for improvement and additional training along with a supportive funding source. The Department makes every effort to educate and train its officers and supervisors on the subject matter. Training begins in the police academy where Police Recruits receive the prescribed training hours on *People with Disabilities* including mental illness per state recommended guidelines. Upon completion of the police academy, officers and supervisors receive "in-house" training specific to the mentally ill.

Recommendation R1: Require specific continuing education for all police officers and sheriff's deputies in interacting with the mentally ill and homeless population:

- *Orange County City Police Chiefs and the Sheriff-Coroner shall corroborate with the Orange County Chiefs and Sheriff's Association to set the type, hours, and frequency of this supplemental training;*
 - *Include Crisis Intervention Training (perhaps the Memphis model);*
 - *Training is to be documented. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F10).*
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This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation established by the Orange County Chiefs and Sheriff's Association. As a member of the association, I will work closely with other members to fulfill this recommendation and the Placentia Police Department will make every effort to provide the specified training.

Recommendation R2: All Orange County City police Departments and the Sheriff's Department shall be accredited with a national accreditation agency within five (5) years. (F4)

The recommendation requires further analysis. While the Placentia Police Department has expressed an interest in national accreditation, the initial and recurring costs and necessary resources associated with implementation of accreditation may be prohibitive based on the documented fiscal constraints of the city.

Recommendation R3: The County of Orange Board of Supervisors shall implement a pilot program for Laura's Law with the necessary accommodations to insure that the program will function effectively as an essential tool to help those with mental illness, thus benefiting law enforcement, and the citizens of Orange County. (F11)

Implementation of this recommendation falls under the scope and responsibility of the County of Orange Board of Supervisors; however, the Placentia Police Department is supportive of additional analysis for establishing a pilot program for Laura's Law as an additional tool for law enforcement to help those with mental illness.

Recommendation R4: The Orange County Department of Mental Health Services and the Orange County Board of Supervisors shall provide funding for on-going police officer training through Mental Health Services Act Funding. (F9)

Implementation of this recommendation falls under the scope and responsibility of the County of Orange Board of Supervisors and the Orange County Department of Mental Health Services, however, the Placentia Police Department is supportive of Orange County Department of Mental Health Services and the Orange County Board of Supervisors providing funding for on-going officer training through Mental Health Services Act Funding.

The Placentia Police Department is proud to be in partnership with the Grand Jury in an effort to increase positive outcomes with the homeless mentally ill at a higher level, and making our community safer as a whole.

Sincerely,



R.A. Hicks
Chief of Police