



August 13, 2024

Honorable Marie Hernandez, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Orange
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Response to 2023-24 Orange County Grand Jury Report “Law Enforcement’s Response to Mental Health Calls for Service”

Dear Judge Hernandez,

The City of Laguna Beach has reviewed the Orange County Grand Jury Report titled “Law Enforcement’s Response to Mental Health Calls for Service.” In accordance with California Penal Code §933.05(a) and (b), the City of Laguna Beach submits the following responses to the findings and recommendations included within the report.

The Laguna Beach Police Department has taken significant steps to improve its response to mental health calls for service, demonstrating a commitment to community well-being and effective law enforcement. One key measure implemented is the comprehensive mental health training for officers, which exceeds the state's requirements. This training equips law enforcement personnel with the necessary skills to better evaluate and handle situations involving mental health issues, ensuring a more nuanced and compassionate approach.

In addition to enhanced training, the department has embraced collaborative efforts with County Psychiatric Emergency Response Teams (PERT) clinicians and Be Well mobile response units. This partnership has proven to be an effective tool in responding to mental health calls, providing specialized support and resources directly at the scene. The Laguna Beach Police Department's commitment to follow-up case management underscores the importance of ongoing support for individuals with mental health issues, highlighting the department's dedication to their long-term well-being.

Findings:

F1. Mental health training for law enforcement officers in Orange County exceeds the State’s requirements, resulting in law enforcement applying these skills to better evaluate and handle mental health calls for service.

Response: The City agrees with the finding.

F2. Law enforcement agencies in Orange County have developed unique ways to deal with mental health calls in their communities based on their particular needs and budgets, enabling law enforcement to better serve their communities.

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Response: The City agrees with the finding.

F3. Law enforcement collaboration with County PERT clinicians and Be Well mobile response units has been an effective tool when responding to mental health calls for service.

Response: The City agrees with the finding.

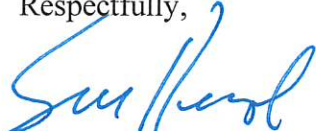
F4. People with mental illness respond more positively to “soft uniformed” police personnel, which can be effective in de-escalating situations.

Response: The City agrees with the finding.

F5. Providing follow-up case management is not only necessary but critical for the wellbeing of people experiencing mental health issues.

Response: The City agrees with the finding.

Respectfully,



Sue Kempf
Mayor

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center West
Santa Ana, CA 92701