

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

## **California Medical Facility 2003-2004 Grand Jury Report**

### **I. Reason for Investigation**

The California Penal Code §919(b) mandates that the Grand Jury inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the County.

### **II. Procedure**

The Grand Jury:

- Interviewed the Chief Deputy Warden and staff
- Inspected the facility
- Observed on-site health care facilities

### **III. Background**

1. The California Medical Facility (CMF) is a joint operation between the California Department of Corrections (CDC) and the California Department of Mental Health (CDMH) providing a centrally located medical and psychiatric institution for the health care needs of the male felon population in California's prisons. The facility was designed to house 2,315 inmates but has been reconfigured by adding beds to house additional inmates.

CMF includes a general acute care hospital, in-patient and out-patient psychiatric facilities, a hospice unit for terminally ill inmates, housing and treatment for inmates identified with AIDS/HIV, general population, and other specialized inmate housing. Additionally, the CDMH operates a licensed, acute care psychiatric hospital within CMF.

2. For fiscal year 2003-2004 the facility has a budget of \$177 million. Annual cost per inmate is approximately \$54,000 compared to the California average of \$18,000 to \$20,000 for non-medical correction institutions.

3. Inmates are classified by level based on age, types of crimes committed and other factors. There are four (4) levels: 1-minimum security, 2-dormitory housing, 3-cell housing and 4- highest security rating. A Separate Housing Unit is for violent inmates.

4. The inmate appeal process (complaints) is handled under Title 15. There are four (4) levels of review.

- Informal – to be resolved within fifteen (15) work days with the staff
- Appeals Coordinator – to be resolved within twenty (20) work days
- Second level – to be resolved within thirty (30) work days
- Reviewed by CDC. and to be resolved within sixty (60) work days

5. The Education program is staffed by fourteen (14) credentialed teachers – 8 in education and 6 in vocational education.

6. CMF employs approximately 1,400 people. It was stated by CMF administrative staff that recruiting and retaining medical personnel is an ongoing problem. Testimony indicated a shortage of nurses and other medical personnel. Inmate visits to the CMF clinic exceed 100,000 per year, an average of 30 visits per inmate per month.

7. Inmate smoking is prohibited throughout the prison, however, correctional officers were observed smoking outside and in view of the inmates.

#### **IV. Findings and Recommendations**

*Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number.*

**Finding #1** - The facility is overcrowded and using spaces not originally intended for inmate housing. (1)

**Recommendation #1** – Overcrowding should be addressed and resolved by the responsible agencies.

**Finding #2** – There is a major shortage of nurses and other medical personnel. (6)

**Recommendation #2** – The state Department of Corrections should look at employment hiring practices with a view to resolve this ongoing problem.

**Finding #3** – Correctional Officers were observed smoking in non-designated areas while on duty. This practice could adversely affect officer-inmate relations. (7)

**Recommendation #3** – Specified smoking areas should not be visible to inmates..

#### **V. Comments**

The facility was very clean and orderly. The staff was well organized and up to date regarding policy and procedures. It was noted that the warden has final authority over both agencies (CDC & CDMH). It is commendable that there is reciprocal use of resources between CMF and California State Prison Solano. They are able to cut costs by sharing such things as utilities and staffing. Their goal was to assure that they meet the most important objectives to the inmate morale – mail, food and visitors. However, an inconsistency was noted in the smoking policy.

#### **VI. Affected Agencies**

- California Medical Facility
- California Department of Corrections