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# SOLANO COUNTY

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August 23, 2016

Honorable Robert C. Fracchia  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
County of Solano  
600 Union Avenue  
Fairfield, CA 95433

To Honorable Judge Fracchia,

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report on June 16, 2016 – Homelessness, Omnipresent and Invisible

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933(c) and 933.05, the Solano County Board of Supervisors responds to Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 16 and 20 and Recommendations 1A, 1B, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8C, 9B, 16 and 20 contained in the 2015/2016 Grand Jury Report of June 16, 2016 entitled "Homelessness – Omnipresent and Invisible," including the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services.

### Finding 1

No significant changes in the number of permanent, emergency, and transitional beds have been made available since the 2008, *Housing with Dignity 10-Year Plan*.

#### Response to Finding 1

**Department of Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services (H&SS) disagrees with this finding through various Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and State program funds, Health and Social Services in FY2015/16 received 1.2 million dollars which provides approximately 260 permanent beds to families, couples, and single individuals. Housing First Solano Continuum of Care (CoC) has continually pursued and received increased funding for permanent beds to support the homeless population, leading to the current year where Solano's region was awarded \$923,977 specifically for permanent beds. In 2016, Solano County ranked third among all counties in California who received renewal funds from HUD, receiving a 19.1% increase in funds coming in to support permanent bed increases. Lastly, in FY2016/17 an Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) fund was awarded to Solano County for the first time, to provide \$560,000 in additional permanent housing.

On February 2, 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved a twenty-year purchase agreement for 20 transitional housing beds dedicated to H&SS clients. The assistance provided by the County will enable Mission Solano to construct a permanent kitchen at the Bridge to life center on Beck Avenue in Fairfield and allow for the expansion of Mission Solano shelter bed capacity by 98 beds. Construction is planned to begin in FY2016/17.

Since the report, as of June 28, 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved a 30 thirty-year loan agreement to assist Solano Habitat for Humanity in partnership with Community Action North Bay to purchase a property in Dixon, and construct permanent supportive housing to assist 6 disabled veterans. The project is anticipated to be on line in 2017.

For these reasons, Health and Social Services disagrees with the finding and anticipates a continued increase in capacity of permanent, emergency, and transitional beds in Solano County.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response to the finding that actions to add additional capacity of permanent, emergency and transitional beds has been initiated and is forthcoming.

### **Recommendation 1A**

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Health and Social Services and Community Action Partnership of Solano-Joint Powers Authority work collaboratively to address the current, unmet need in Solano County of 711 year-round permanent supportive housing beds, including 638 beds for adults-only households and 71 beds for families with children, as well as, three transitional housing beds.

#### **Response to Recommendation 1A**

**Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services agrees with this recommendation and will continue collaborating with the cities, Community Action Partnership of Solano-Joint Powers Authority (CAP Solano JPA) and key community stakeholders to increase permanent bed capacity in Solano County.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response that this recommendation has been implemented and will continue to work collaboratively with community stakeholders to increase permanent bed capacity in Solano County.

### **Recommendation 1B**

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Community Action Partnership of Solano-Joint Powers Authority consider the approaches outlined in the Sonoma County Website referencing Building HOMES.

#### **Response to Recommendation 1B**

**Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services agrees with the recommendation, as the HOMES document reflects national best practices and strategies in support of housing and services.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response that this recommendation has been implemented.

### **Finding 2**

There is no County operated permanent homeless shelter or drop-in center in Solano County. The 795 unsheltered individuals from the 2015 Point in Time Count strongly suggest there is a need for more drop in facilities.

#### **Response to Finding 2**

**Department of Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services partially agrees that there is no County operated permanent homeless shelter or drop-in center in Solano County; however, there are several supportive housing programs funded and supported through Health and Social Services in Solano County.

The County, Cities, and CAP Solano JPA continually seek ways to leverage State and Federal funds. As reported through studies across the nation on best practices, county and city governments will be focusing on more permanent solutions to homelessness as opposed to expansion of temporary solutions and shelters, studies suggest that when properly structured, it is more cost effective to invest in permanent housing with supportive services.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response to the finding.

## Recommendation 2

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Community Action Partnership of Solano-Joint Powers Authority work collaboratively to establish a localized permanent, year-round homeless shelter or drop-in center.

### Response to Recommendation 2

**Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services disagrees with this recommendation. There currently are year-round homeless shelters in Solano County and on February 2, 2016, the Board of Supervisors took action for Mission Solano to expand by 98 beds which were anticipated for 2016 but have been delayed beyond the County's contract.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response that this recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted as currently year-round homeless shelters exist and the Board took action to expand the permanent number of beds back in February.

## Finding 3

There are no publicly funded residential drug and alcohol treatment centers in Solano County operated by the County.

### Response to Finding 3

**Department of Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services disagrees with this finding. There are no residential drug and treatment centers operated by the County, however, through several public funding sources, the County contracts for these services to the tune of \$4.45 million dollars annually. There are several services providers under contract in the county who operate residential drug and alcohol treatment centers. In addition, the County has contracts funded with State & Federal funds for residents to have access to partner centers outside of Solano County if resources are not readily available here.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response to the finding.

## Recommendation 3

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the Community Action Partnership of Solano-Joint Powers Authority work collaboratively to establish publicly funded residential drug and alcohol treatment centers.

### Response to Recommendation 3

**Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services disagrees with this recommendation, across the state, residential drug treatment facilities operate uniquely in each region. Funding and operations are dependent upon available federal and state funding, county general fund, resources, facilities, and staff. All of this typically is a reflection of the county's size, geography, population, etc. Solano receives and spends approximately \$4.45 million each year in contracts for residential centers in this county. With this level of funding, the county is maximizing what the current capacity is to support these facilities. The department recognizes the value that increased services provides, and will be working with the state on the Drug Medi-Cal Waiver project, and Partnership Health Plan to look at and identify services in this region for those with substance abuse concerns.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response that this recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted for the reasons provided by the department.

### Finding 4

There are no County operated and funded board and care homes for elderly, physically impaired or patients with mental health issues in Solano County.

### Response to Finding 4

**Department of Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services partially agrees with this finding. While the County does not directly operate any Board and Care Homes, the County provides for board and care for many individuals who need this level of housing and care. Through Memorandums of Understanding and Contracts with facilities, the County provides oversight to the quality of service delivery to clients placed. Within Solano County, Crestwood operates an "augmented board and care," where for a daily rate, the clients are provided with housing and a structured mental health treatment program during the day. The program "Our House," operates 46 beds in Vallejo, and accepts clients from all over the region. There is little movement in terms of clients moving out of this facility, but Solano County has had five clients living there in the past year and has come to an agreement with Crestwood to prioritize Solano County clients when they have discharges.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response to the finding.

### Recommendation 4

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Community Action Partnership of Solano-Joint Powers Authority work collaboratively to establish publicly funded board and care homes for elderly, physically impaired, or patients with mental health issues in Solano County operated by the County.

### Response to Recommendation 4

**Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services disagrees with this recommendation. While the department agrees that there is a need for more Board and Care Homes in the community, the department disagrees that they should be operated by the County. Currently, the need for these services is greater than just the clients the County serves, there are other individuals with other medical care issues who would also benefit; it is a viable non-profit /private sector opportunity. Staff is working with local hospitals and board and care providers to pursue the Assisted Living Waiver (ALW) program in Solano. ALW facilitates safe and timely transition of Medi-Cal eligible individuals from nursing facilities to residential facilities, adult care facilities, and public subsidized housing in the community. ALW pays for skilled care in these facilities, making affordable housing possible for this population. Though this program is not a “catch-all” for the senior population or those with disabilities, having ALW may increase capacity for board and care homes while strengthening Solano’s network of providers.

Increasing the availability of Board and Care homes is needed based on increasing aging population in the County and longevity due to improved health care. As noted earlier, the County has partnered successfully with Bay Area Community Services using Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds for the purchase of seven duplexes in Fairfield. In addition, MHSA grant funds were used to purchase and renovate a large home in Vallejo which will serve as a new crisis residential treatment facility for the County.

The lack of available housing and support for those in the housing, would require a collaborative approach between both County and community providers. Health and Social Services believes that this would be best achieved through Memorandums of Understanding in a comprehensive public-private partnership in order to be sustained within the communities.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response that this recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted for the reasons provided by the department.

### Recommendation 5

The Solano County Board of Supervisors, and the Mayors / City Managers in Solano County engage citizens to develop and recommend priorities and projects through the adoption of a *Participatory Budget Process*.

#### Response to Recommendation 5

**Board of Supervisors:** This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Board is always open to recommendations and input from citizens throughout the year and conducts public workshops for the public to provide input on organizational goals on key projects that impact the budget process.

### Recommendation 6

The Solano County Board of Supervisors direct the County Administrator’s Office to commission and fund a study to identify the real cost of homelessness in Solano County using the same criteria as used by Santa Clara County.

#### Response to Recommendation 6

**Board of Supervisors:** This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted because the County and the cities are currently funding a 5-year regional strategic plan to act as a road map to reduce homelessness.

### Finding 8

Among all the organizations, including the service provider agencies, funders, a county and municipal government, no agency has assumed an overall leadership role. Although some leadership exists at the individual agency and county levels, the lack of coordination at the county and municipal levels contributes to the observed fragmentation of service provision and poor understanding of the causes and cures of homelessness.

#### Response to Finding 8

**Department of Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services disagrees with this recommendation. The Community Action Partnership Joint Powers Authority (CAP Solano JPA) is a partnership established between the County and the 7 cities to be the body that oversees, coordinates, and collaborates on homeless issues. Currently, it is this body that is spearheading the five-year strategic plan soon to be the roadmap to reduce homelessness in Solano County.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response to the finding.

### Recommendation 8C

The Solano County Board of Supervisors serving in the capacity of the Solano City County Coordinating Council work in conjunction with the recommended Deputy Director to seek out regional solutions on a priority basis.

#### Response to Recommendation 8C

**Board of Supervisors:** This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Cap Solano – JPA was established as the lead agency and is currently preparing a 5-year regional strategic plan to act as a road map to reduce homelessness.

### Finding 9

The Grand Jury understands regional planning is a necessary and vital component to creating solutions to homelessness and has been informed that efforts are underway to develop a regional approach to the homelessness issues.

#### Response to Finding 9

**Department of Health and Social Services:** Health and Social Services agrees with this finding, as a 5-year strategic plan is being undertaken by the CAP Solano JPA funded through a collaborative effort between the County and the 7 cities. The plan is anticipated to be drafted by the end of 2016 and will be a living document to be referred to as each solution identified is implemented. The plan will engage input from the public, stakeholder, constituencies, housing and service providers, the cities, and the County.

**Board of Supervisors:** The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services response to the finding.

### Recommendation 9B

The Solano County Board of Supervisors serving in the capacity of the Solano City County Coordinating Council, establish homelessness as a priority item on their agenda and support the implementation of a regional plan as part of their responsibilities.

#### **Response to Recommendation 9B**

**Board of Supervisors:** The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. In recognition of the need to create and implement a regional plan to reduce homelessness in Solano County in the form of a 5-year strategic plan and with the support of the city managers, CAP Solano JPA has extended a contract with HomeBase, who are experts dedicated to ending homelessness, preventing its recurrence, and decreasing its effect on communities. The 5-year strategic plan will be a guiding document for all coordinating agencies, including the cities, CAP Solano JPA, service providers, stakeholders and the general public to implement and measure results. The regional plan is expected to be completed in late 2016.

#### **Finding 16**

County contributions by the Board of Supervisors to the Community Action Partnership of Solano – JPA have remained constant at \$86,750 per year (20 cents per resident) since 1999.

#### **Response to Finding 16**

**Board of Supervisors:** The Solano County Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

#### **Recommendation 16**

The Solano County Board of Supervisors should consider increasing this contribution to the Community Action Partnership of Solano – JPA. Based on inflation alone the \$86,750 amount should have increased by at least 3% compounded annually (cumulatively 42.9% in 17 years). Even this amount pales in comparison to the \$588,000 that Vallejo and the \$506,000 that Fairfield are dedicating to local homeless programs.

#### **Response to Recommendation 16**

**Board of Supervisors:** This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The \$86,750 contribution to the CAP Solano – JPA is intended to assist with the cost of staffing. The County also provides funding to support the 5-year regional strategic plan and the Point in Time Count. Apart from these contributions the County is also directly contributing to increase transitional and permanent supportive housing as described in response to Finding 1.

#### **Finding 20**

It is incumbent on the Solano County Board of Supervisors to fulfill Solano County citizens' expectation of leadership and to address and solve the problems within this County.

#### **Response to Finding 20**

**Board of Supervisors:** The Solano County Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding and works hard to address and provide fiscally responsible solutions the problems within Solano County.

#### **Recommendation 20**

The Grand Jury recognizes that the Board of Supervisors has been instrumental in addressing the past deficiencies of the Community Action Partnership of Solano – JPA. We encourage their continued efforts by implementing the recommendations within this report to elevate the issue of homelessness to the priority which it warrants.

**Response to Recommendation 20**

**Board of Supervisors:** This recommendation has been implemented. The Solano County Board of Supervisors appreciates and commends the Grand Jury for all of the work it takes to compile such a comprehensive report. The Board of Supervisors will continue to work with the cities, CAP Solano JPA and members of the community to elevate the issue of homelessness to the priority it deserves in Solano County.

Respectfully,



Erin Hannigan, Chairwoman  
Solano County Board of Supervisors

cc: Clerk of the Board, Solano County Board of Supervisors  
Gerald Huber, Director, Solano County Health and Social Services  
Dennis Bunting, County Counsel, Solano County  
Solano County Grand Jury Office