

August 1, 2006

Honorable Judge Rodney Melville
Presiding Judge
Superior Court
312-M East Cook Street
Santa Maria, California 93455-5165

**Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2005-06 Civil Grand Jury Reports on:
"Disaster Preparedness"**

Dear Judge Melville:

During its regular meeting of Tuesday, August 1, 2006, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following responses as its responses to the 2005-06 Grand Jury's report on "Disaster Preparedness".

The Board of Supervisors thanks the Grand Jury for its findings and recommendations on this important matter.

Emergency Operations Center

Finding 1

The Santa Barbara County EOC is housed in a temporary modular building that is not rated for an emergency government function and could fail in an earthquake.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and the Fire Department's responses as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors and County Administration should immediately prioritize the process of identifying a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and the Fire Department's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The CEO has identified a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions. The identified site is at the Santa Ynez Airport and staff have been collaborating with the Airport Authority and the Federal Aviation Administration on the logistics of developing a new EOC at this location. The CEO and the Board of Supervisors have committed funding toward the construction of a new EOC. Specifically, the Adopted 2006-2007 Budget includes \$3 million for a new EOC. Additionally, the Sheriff has committed \$300,000 and an additional \$1.7 million may be allocated toward the EOC contingent on financial health of the County's General Fund (bringing the project total to \$5 million). The County Architect has commenced with the drawing of a conceptual design of the new EOC.

Finding 2

In the event of a power failure at the EOC after business hours, emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up to the facility by employees living outside the south coast area.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's responses as its response. (Partially disagrees with the finding with respect to only South Coast employees being able to hook up the back-up power.)

Recommendation 2

Install a dedicated electrical hook-up between the EOC and the emergency generator whereby the generator will automatically start and provide power to the EOC in the event of a local power failure.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's responses as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.)

The County has secured homeland security grant funding to install an automated switch for the emergency generator. Installation of the automated switch will be completed within 6 months.

Finding 3

Telephone switching and computer networking equipment necessary to activate the communications systems in the EOC is located in a hall closet of the facility and is not anchored to the structure, making it subject to damage in the event of an earthquake.

Response: The Board adopted the both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding. All County-owned computer and communication equipment is anchored to the structure.)

Recommendation 3

Secure the EOC telephone system and computer networking switching equipment with earthquake mounting bracketing. Printed instructions on the equipment should be visible to inform persons activating the EOC how to hook up the emergency communications lines.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit. However, the lease agreement between the City College and the County's Employee University facility ends June 30, 2006 and will not be renewed. Therefore, the non-secured equipment will be removed from this facility with the remaining equipment already having been anchored. There are printed instructions on the equipment.

Finding 4

At the time of the Grand Jury's visit to the EOC, it appeared that the facility lacked updated emergency maps, plans, procedure manuals, logistical resource information, and support supplies. Emergency responders, participants, and decision-makers staffing the EOC are expected to go first to their daily work site (office) and pick up information they need before going to the EOC.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (Disagree partially with the finding, as there are section boxes at the EOC that contain manuals, maps and decision-making information for relevant staff.)

Recommendation 4

Provide updated manuals, maps and decision-making information at the EOC at all times for agencies with assigned functions in the EOC.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The EOC section boxes (file box for each EOC section) contain this information already. However, OES staff is working on producing updated maps, manuals and decision-making information at the EOC so that staff does not need to first go to their daily work

site (office). The OES will continue to ensure that updated materials are located at the EOC for relevant persons.

Finding 5

Employees of Santa Barbara County who are not employed in one of the public safety departments may receive as little as one hour of emergency training regarding their roles in a major disaster.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding, although many employees outside of the public safety departments do receive more than one hour of emergency training).

Recommendation 5

Expand employee emergency training programs to not just focus on new employees but to train all employees on an annual basis so they will remain informed of current County emergency procedures and what is expected of them in a disaster.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented in part and will continue to be implemented throughout the year.)

In terms of training all employees about the County's emergency procedures and expectations during a disaster, the County's Employee Handbook states that "In emergencies, the public relies on County services for information and assistance. All County employees, by the nature of their employment, are emergency workers. Employees may be called upon to perform duties other than their regular assignments to aid County emergency efforts."

Many departments augment this policy by showing a twelve minute video on County employees' responsibilities during disasters at departmental staff meetings.

In addition, County departments routinely conduct fire and earthquake drills, including evacuation procedures, so that employees are aware of emergency procedures. OES conducts specialized technical training on emergency management such as the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) training for personnel assigned to the Emergency Operations Center. County employees attending the new orientation course at the Employees University are all provided with SEMS training. In addition, the CEO's office annually sponsors 10 employees with EOC responsibilities to attend a 40-hour course in emergency management at the California Specialized Training Institute in San Luis Obispo.

Finding 6

Presently there is no motivating factor that requires the County Administrative Officer or County department heads to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority for themselves or their employees.

Response: The Board adopted the CEO's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding as the CEO and other department heads are motivated to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority for themselves and their employees and, furthermore, are required to do so as stated in their job descriptions.)

The motivating factor that requires the County Executive Officer to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority is that emergency management is a requirement of the job responsibilities for this position. Specifically, the areas of responsibility and accountability for the County Executive Officer as containing in the job description for this position include "emergency management: Controls and directs the effort of the emergency organization of the county; appoints and supervises the coordinator of the office of emergency services; provides leadership in the development of public policy; acts as liaison with other agencies; has authority to proclaim a "state of emergency" when locally available resources are inadequate to cope with the emergency" .

The County Executive Officer, as noted in Ordinance No. 4564, is the ex officio Director of Emergency Services. As such, he has coordinated and commanded emergency efforts for the County during various emergencies related to severe winter storms, flooding, tsunami warning and fires. Both the County Executive Officer and several County Department heads such as General Services, Fire (includes OES staff), Public Health, Public Works and Sheriff have made training regarding disasters a high priority for themselves and essential executives within their department.

Furthermore, emergency training has been provided to many department heads and other executives. For example, the County sponsors ten spaces each year for department heads and other executives to attend a four day course on Emergency Operations Center/Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Training for earthquakes and other disasters at the California Specialized Training Institute. The County Executive Officer and Deputy County Officer have attended this training in the past. Training in National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) has commenced with such departments as Public Health, Sheriff, Fire and OES rolling the training out to all their employees. Various County employees involved in the County's pandemic planning efforts have also undergone this type of training. NIMS/SEMS training will be required of all department heads starting in the beginning of 2007.

Recommendation 6

Incorporate emergency related functions and employee training in emergency preparedness in the job descriptions of the County Administrative Officer and department managers and as a goal in their annual performance evaluations.

Response: The Board adopted the CEO's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented in part and the remainder of the recommendation will be implemented in the beginning of 2007.)

The County Executive Officer job description already requires emergency management and preparedness. Specifically, the County Executive Officer “controls and directs the effort of the emergency organization of the county; appoints and supervises the coordinator of the office of emergency services; provides leadership in the development of public policy; acts as liaison with other agencies; has authority to proclaim a "state of emergency" when locally available resources are inadequate to cope with the emergency.”

The County Department Directors annual “Executive Performance Appraisal and Plan” currently contains an assessment on the Director’s cooperation in emergency preparation and operations as well as an assessment of whether the Director has completed appropriate emergency preparedness and operations training for his/her department. Furthermore, NIMS/SEMS training will be required of all department heads starting in the beginning of 2007.

Emergency Public Information

Finding 1

The present system of getting information to the public will likely fail in a major disaster. Recent consolidations of radio and television stations in Santa Barbara have led to prerecorded formatting. This format makes the availability of live emergency information difficult if not impossible.

Response: The Board adopted OES’s response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 1

The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services should work with news media representatives in Santa Barbara County to develop an emergency public information system that will keep the public informed during a disaster.

Response: The Board adopted OES’s response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

OES has been involved with the Emergency Public Information Communicators (EPIC) group since its inception and is also working in partnership with the local broadcasters to further enhance the emergency public information system. The County has also funded a full-time Public Information Officer (PIO) in the Adopted 2006-07 budget and is actively recruiting to fill this position. The County PIO will be a full-time position tasked with working with the media in order to enhance the County’s ability to disseminate emergency public information in a disaster. In addition, a memorandum of understanding with the broadcasters in the area should be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 2

The Office of Emergency Services presently relies on voluntary participation of radio and television providers to participate in the Emergency Alert System.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 2

The County of Santa Barbara should enter into a permanent agreement with local media stations guaranteeing their participation in the Emergency Alert System.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation will not be fully implemented because the County does not have any jurisdiction over the radio stations.)

The Federal Communications Commission regulates both radio and television broadcasting and the County of Santa Barbara has no direct regulatory authority over radio or television station broadcasting content, only over the County's Government Access Television (CSBTv). The Santa Barbara Local Emergency Alert System (EAS) Plan portion of the California State Emergency Alert System Plan is governed by part 11 of the Rules and Regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Under this Plan broadcast and Cable Television stations in Santa Barbara County will voluntarily rebroadcast, using EAS equipment specified by the FCC, selected messages originated by the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Santa Barbara County, who are accountable for their content. In addition, there is currently no single radio station that with coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County. However, Santa Barbara County is currently working in partnership with the broadcasters in Santa Barbara County. A memorandum of understanding with the broadcasters in the area should be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 3

Only the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and the Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers have a Reverse 911 Notification System. These dispatch centers could be greatly impacted by large populated cities like Santa Maria and Santa Barbara requesting the use of their systems in a County-wide emergency.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 3

Within Santa Barbara County, each city and special fire district dispatch center should establish its own independent Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System. This will reduce the possibility of overloading the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers in the event of a County-wide major disaster.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented by the Sheriff as it pertains to other agencies.)

The Sheriff's Department is committed to the reverse 911 technology to notify the public in emergency situations and to training other agencies in using this technology. Since the Sheriff's Department, through its Public Safety Dispatch Center, dispatches for the special fire districts of Carpinteria-Summerland, Solvang and Orcutt, they should not be responsible for establishing their own independent Reverse 911 notification system. Neither should the city of Guadalupe need to have a Reverse 911 notification system as their police and fire are dispatched through the Sheriff's center. Nothing should preclude the Montecito Fire District from obtaining a Reverse 911 notification system if they choose to do so. However, both the Sheriff's Department and the Montecito Fire District would prefer to use the current Sheriff's Reverse 911 notification system to prevent duplicate messages and in times of emergency conflicting messages. Notification to the public in a County-wide emergency could be severely taxed if Santa Maria or Santa Barbara also request to use either the County system or the Lompoc City system simultaneously to those agency's current use of their systems in notifying the public. If those two cities purchased the Reverse 911 notification system all agencies could share the telephone lines for single event notification thereby getting the word out to the public faster.

Finding 4

Based upon results, the Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System presently utilized by residents of Painted Cave is an excellent means of notifying people of emergencies occurring in their area. Presently this system is only used in the Highway 154 Painted Cave area.

Response: Response not required from the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 4

All areas within Santa Barbara County that have the unique topography and vulnerability to wildfires or flooding should install a Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System to warn their residents.

Response: Response not required from the Board of Supervisors.

Finding 5

Santa Barbara County and emergency agencies within its borders do not have an emergency website or telephone number where citizens can access real-time emergency information.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (Partially disagree with the finding as the County's website is regularly updated and provides real-time emergency information when an emergency does occur within the County.)

Recommendation 5

Santa Barbara County should immediately develop an emergency Internet website or hotline telephone number that will allow its residents to get real-time accurate

emergency information. This website or hotline telephone number should be updated with the same information that is given to the media.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet implemented, but will be implemented by the end of 2006.)

While the County already places emergency information on its website for residents to get real-time information during defined emergencies, it will also work with the "2-1-1" system, which is a 24/7 system that provides callers with information about and referrals to human services for every day needs and in times of crisis. A memorandum of understanding between the County and the "2-1-1" system is being crafted that will allow the County to utilize this system to provide real-time accurate emergency management system.

Finding 6

The Office of Emergency Services has not designated an emergency radio station to which residents may tune to receive accurate updated emergency information on a 24-hour basis.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding, as OES has not designated an emergency radio station because there is no single radio station that will provide coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County. Rather, there are four radio stations, including one that broadcasts in Spanish, which serve the area and are included in the County's Emergency Alert System Plan.)

Recommendation 6

The Office of Emergency Services should enter into an agreement with a 24-hour media radio station that will be designated as the official emergency station for Santa Barbara County.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (The recommendation will be implemented in part by the end of the year, but will not be implemented as proposed by the Civil Grand Jury.)

There is no single radio station that will provide coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County; therefore, it cannot enter into an agreement with one 24-hour media station. The County is working on developing a memorandum of understanding with the several broadcast stations in the area, which will be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 7

Parent education programs in schools throughout Santa Barbara County have had varying degrees of success in informing parents what will happen to their children during and after an emergency.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the

finding.)

Recommendation 7

School districts throughout Santa Barbara County should review their school site disaster plans with their local emergency agencies to ensure that the plans are updated and appropriate. Schools should expand their efforts to keep students and parents informed of all aspects of emergency preparedness and survival through written information provided in both English and Spanish when appropriate.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented by the County because it is outside of the County's jurisdiction. However, OES will continue to support disaster planning efforts in the local schools.)

Finding 8

In late 2005, representatives of agencies in Santa Barbara County that are responsible for providing the public with emergency information formed a public information group (EPIC), with the goal to address problems relating to the collection, verification and dissemination of accurate emergency information.

Response: The Board adopted both the Sheriff Department and OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 8

All participating agencies should continue to support the efforts of the Emergency Public Information Communicators Group (EPIC), which is dedicated to improving the emergency public information system throughout Santa Barbara County.

Response: The Board adopted both the Sheriff Department and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented. The Sheriff and ES have been involved with EPIC since its inception and will continue to participate within this group.)

Emergency Sheltering

Finding 1

Only a small number of the Santa Barbara County residents are prepared to shelter in place in a disaster. This means that the community as a whole will not be prepared when an emergency occurs.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Agrees with the finding. While no data exists concerning the number of residents who are prepared to shelter in place we believe that few residents are prepared.)

Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors should fund an outreach and educational program designed to explain to all residents of Santa Barbara County how to survive in place in a disaster.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented in part, and will be further implemented in fiscal years 2006-2008.

The Board of Supervisors currently funds the Fire Department's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, which trains people to respond to disasters and other emergencies. The 20-hour CERT course provides training in disaster preparedness, fire suppression, first aid, and light search and rescue. As noted in the response to Recommendation 5 of the Emergency Public Information section, the County is also entering into a memorandum of understanding with the "2-1-1" system to provide information to residents about disaster survival. The Board of Supervisors has also charged the County Executive Officer with creating an overall pandemic strategy for the County. A public education/information/training team has been created as part of this project and this team is developing an outreach and educational program. The Board will review the outreach and educational program and any funding implications associated with it when the pandemic strategy is brought to the Board later this calendar year for final approval.

Finding 2

The Red Cross provides leadership in planning for and meeting sheltering needs during an emergency. Two County agencies, Social Services and the Public Health Department, assist the Red Cross in emergency sheltering.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 2

The Department of Social Services should request a budget allocation for emergency planning and training.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented.)

The Department of Social Services' budget includes funding for basic emergency planning and training. However, if the current State budgeting system changes for FY 2007-08 and allows counties to request line items Department of Social Services will submit a request for additional funds for more emergency planning and training activities.

Finding 3

The Department of Social Services does not have an adequate budget for emergency preparedness.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding.)

The Department of Social Services' budget includes funding for basic emergency preparedness for our staff. This includes planning and executing building evacuations for each facility on a yearly basis; informing new staff of their disaster response responsibilities as county employees and providing sheltering training for our staff from the Red Cross. The Department of Social Services plans to send staff to the SEMS Earthquake training in FY 2006-07.

Recommendation 3

The Board of Supervisors should allocate funding for the Department of Social Services for emergency preparedness, to enable Social Services to quickly increase its preparedness for its role in disaster sheltering and to conduct joint exercises with the Red Cross on a regular basis.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented in part, and will be further implemented in fiscal year 2007-2008.

As noted by the Department of Social Services in its response to Finding 3, the department's current budget includes funding for basic emergency preparedness for its staff. Further, the Department cited in responding to Recommendation 4 of the section on emergency sheltering that it will be working with the Red Cross to conduct exercises and training. As noted in the response to Recommendation 1 of this section, the County Executive Officer is creating an overall pandemic strategy for the County. The roles of Social Services and the Red Cross are being examined as part of this project. Any funding implications related to the implementation of the pandemic strategy as it relates to the Social Services Department will be considered by the Board when the overall strategy is approved. Finally, the Social Services Department will send staff to the four day Emergency Operations Center/Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) training conducted by the California Specialized Training Institute.

Finding 4

The Department of Social Services does not adequately prepare for a disaster. Its personnel have only limited disaster preparedness training to support emergency sheltering set up by the Red Cross.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding.)

The Red Cross is the first responder for emergency sheltering and as such requests assistance from DSS when their own resources are outpaced by demand. Approximately 25% of our staff have been trained by the Red Cross for sheltering functions and our goal is to increase that each year beginning in FY 2006-07. Our goal will be to have at least 50% of our staff trained over the next two years.

Recommendation 4

The Department of Social Services should send more of their personnel to Red Cross emergency training and plan more emergency exercises in order to support the Red Cross in an emergency.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.)

The Department of Social Services will work with the Red Cross to increase the training to two times per year. The first training will be scheduled in the fall of 2006. We will work with the Red Cross and County OES to design one exercise each year.

Finding 5

Emergency shelter registration using a manual paper process limits the usefulness of the registration process, having no search, sort, or transmission capability.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Agrees with this finding. This is a Red Cross System and is not administered by DSS.)

Recommendation 5

Paper registration at all shelters should be supplemented with computerized filing for rapid access to registrant data and to support searches for family members who are separated.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented, as the Red Cross is responsible for the registration function.)

Emergency Medical Response

Finding 1

There has been very limited activity and planning for vulnerable populations at the County level since 2002 when the Task Force first issued its Vulnerable Populations Plan. This resulted from the Public Health Department no longer having a staff person to assist with the maintenance of the Plan in general and the Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. The vulnerable populations' location maps have not been updated and are only available in their current state for use by the Emergency Operations Center.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

The Department of Public Health agrees that the Vulnerable Populations Plan should be

updated. Over time, key sections of the plan have been updated and are available in multiple County locations — Emergency Operations Center, the Public Health Department Operations Center as well as within the Emergency Medical Services Agency.

Recommendation 1

The Public Health Department should take the lead in revitalizing the Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations. This plan should be further developed, implemented and kept current. Additional human and financial resources should be allocated to accomplish this.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health’s response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in fiscal year 2006-2007.)

The County has a need for an updated Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations and will determine the best department to lead this effort. Since planning for responding to the emergency needs of these special populations crosses over many departments it would be better suited to house this plan in the County’s all hazard multi-functional disaster plan. This plan addresses all threats and will be including the pandemic planning efforts the County is involved with currently. One option is to build a web-based application to create a mechanism for maintaining an updated inventory. This approach will be discussed with the IT pandemic planning team.

Finding 2

The Public Health Department is not currently coordinating any ongoing outreach or education programs for licensed facilities, community-based organizations, or care providers and families of vulnerable populations. There is no organized method to ensure that the Plan is reviewed and updated annually or that any of the support documentation is current.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health’s response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 2

The Public Health Department should update the Disaster Plan to reflect new threats, for example, bioterrorism and epidemics such as avian flu.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health’s response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Revisions to the PHD disaster plan with an all-hazard focus will be completed in 2006.)

Finding 3

There are no specific steps that are targeted to provide coordination for individual disaster plans with licensed programs and facilities, such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted-living, home care and hospice programs.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 3

The Director of the EMS Agency should participate in meetings of the County Disaster Council.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented, as the EMS Agency Director will attend these meetings.)

Finding 4

The Public Health Department does not have mutual aid agreements with the military, for example, Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 4

The Public Health Department should work collaboratively with skilled nursing homes, board and care, and other licensed facilities needing assistance in developing coordinated plans to ensure that their populations' needs are met in a disaster and that inpatient facilities have current evacuation plans and memorandums of understanding with like facilities.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The Department of Public Health's currently works with health care facilities in their disaster planning efforts when requested and will continue to provide assistance to interested agencies. It should be noted that facilities such as skilled nursing homes, board and care and other licensed care facilities are required to have current evacuation plans, plans to ensure that their populations' needs are met in a disaster, and to meet other State licensing requirements. PHD will invite these agencies to participate in medical and health disaster planning exercises that are conducted throughout the year.

Finding 5

The Chumash Tribe is not actively involved in the County's disaster planning activities.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding as the Chumash are involved in disaster planning activities with the Office of Emergency Services. The Chumash participate in other emergency management activities of the County, which are spearheaded by the County OES.)

Recommendation 5

The Public Health Department should coordinate with the local Department of

Homeland Security Office to ensure that each is aware of the other's activities. The Public Health Department should continue to conduct exercises and drills with its community and regional partners, including emergency management and other agencies.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented as the Department coordinates with our local FBI disaster/terrorism response coordinator. There is not a separate local Homeland Security Office in the County. PHD does coordinate with local law enforcement and the Office of Emergency Service (OES).)

Finding 6

The County does not have a current registry of potential volunteers (licensed physicians, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians) who could be called on to assist in a disaster.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 6

The Public Health Department should develop mutual agreements with the military, and ensure that the Department has current contact information for base leaders and healthcare providers.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Department is currently working with Vandenberg Air Force Base on a MOU for medical /health mutual aid. We have a verbal understanding in place to provide mutual aid in the event of a medical emergency.

Recommendation 7

The Public Health Department should engage the Chumash Tribe so it can be involved in the planning and disaster preparedness process.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The Department of Public Health has invited the Chumash Tribe to participate in planning and disaster preparedness activities. We will continue to solicit the Tribes participation in planning efforts as well as disaster exercises and drills. It should be noted however that the Chumash do participate in other emergency management activities of the County which are spearheaded by the County OES.

Recommendation 8

The Public Health Department should continue to work with the State to ensure that volunteer activities of healthcare workers are coordinated and that this resource is available in the event of an emergency. It should make certain that the list of retired

nurses and physicians and other local private healthcare professionals contains current information. Medical registries need to be developed in conjunction with the State EMS to pre-identify medical personnel who are willing and able to participate in a disaster response system.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in 2006.)

As part of the county-wide pandemic planning efforts the PHD has established a team to develop a Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), using the State's newly develop Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VIP) on-line registry for licensed medical professional within the county. In addition the PHD through the county-wide pandemic planning efforts, the IT group is also planning to help the MRC team develop a database to track all MRC volunteers in the county to track participation, training and deployment. We are working closely with the Medical Society to develop policies and procedures to coordinate a MRC response plan. We will be beginning enrolling health professionals into the system in August 2006. This will be an on-going process.

Sincerely,

Joni Gray
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Ted Sten, Foreperson Civil Grand Jury 2005-06