



August 12, 2008

The Honorable William J. McLafferty
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa St., 2nd Floor
Santa Barbara, California 93121-1107

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Attention: Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

**CEO/Human Resource Department Response to the 2007-08 Grand Jury Report on:
Child Welfare Services
A System of Care That Lacks Stability**

Dear Judge McLafferty:

Attached is my response to the current grand jury report entitled Child Welfare Services. The Grand Jury requested that CEO/Human Resources respond to findings number 3 and 5.

Sincerely,

Susan Paul
Assistant CEO/Human Resources Director

C: Ted Sten, Grand Jury Foreperson 2007-08
Michael F. Brown, County Executive Officer
Kathy Gallagher, Social Services Director

Received

AUG 25 2008

Santa Barbara
Grand Jury

CEO/HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY 2007-08 GRAND JURY

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

**Child Welfare Services
A System of Care That Lacks Stability**

FINDING 3

There is an increasingly high turnover of social workers in Child Welfare Services. This finding was reported by the 2000-2001 Grand Jury. This situation still exists and is getting worse.

RESPONSE TO FINDING 3

Partially agree; partially disagree. The 2000-2001 Grand Jury report indicated that the turnover rate for new hires was 90% in the probationary period of their service and that the average tenure of the social worker was not more than two years. The 2007-2008 Grand Jury report concludes that the turnover rate of social workers in Child Welfare Services has increased dramatically and alarmingly. However, in 2007, the turnover rate for new hires in the probationary period of their service was 65% and the average tenure of CWS social workers was 6.24 years. While the County could have reduced some turnover (e.g., turnover related to discharge for performance), some turnover is outside of the County's control and is not an indication of negative turnover, such as returning to school, career change and maternity.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Departments of Social Services and Human Resources should immediately investigate and address the problem of high turnover rate of social workers.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 3

Agree with the recommendation.

This recommendation has been implemented and continues to be implemented. The Departments of Social Services and Human Resources have investigated and are addressing the turnover of social workers. CEO/Human Resources is assisting the Department of Social Services in a review of the training and supervision of social workers in Child Welfare Services.

FINDING 5

Over the past several years, due to the increase in methamphetamine abuse, there has been a significant increase in substantiated cases of child neglect and abuse, resulting in more children being placed in foster care.

RESPONSE TO FINDING 5

I neither agree nor disagree with the finding. This is not an area reviewed or managed by CEO/Human Resources.