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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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February 25, 2022

The Honorable Gustavo Lavayen
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Santa Barbara

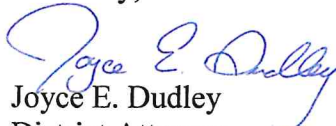
Ms. Pamela Olsen
Foreperson
2019-2020 Santa Barbara Grand Jury
Santa Barbara Courthouse

Dear Presiding Judge Lavayen and Foreperson Olsen:

Enclosed please find the response from the Office of the District Attorney regarding the December 2021 Grand Jury Report entitled *Jail Diversion in Santa Barbara County*.

If I can be of any further assistance or respond to any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Joyce E. Dudley
District Attorney

cc: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Santa Barbara County Executive Office Mona Miyasato
Santa Barbara County District Attorney Executive Staff

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Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office
Response to the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury 2020-2021 Report
"Jail Diversion in Santa Barbara County: Criminal Justice Partners Are Finding
Common Ground"

Finding 1

The Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office, Santa Barbara County District Attorney, Santa Barbara County Public Defender, Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness, and Santa Barbara County Probation Department need a consolidated criminal justice data system.

The Santa Barbara County District Attorney disagrees wholly. The County's Criminal Justice Data Committee (CJDC) includes the Santa Barbara County District Attorney, the Probation Department, the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office, Santa Barbara County Public Defender, Santa Barbara Behavioral Wellness, and the County of Santa Barbara Superior Court as participating partners. Together, the CJDC have developed and worked to establish the Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS). The IJIS is a platform that allows each agency to share, analyze and report data amongst the participating partner agencies. The IJIS has refined a process for matching data from disparate agency systems, which are otherwise not compatible. This system is both flexible and efficient, as it allows agencies to request only the data required to work on a particular project, and outlines limitations on using that data to ensure each agency's confidentiality requirements and regulations are met.

Historically, each of the agencies involved in the CJDC have their own caseload and data management systems, which were put in place to meet the specific needs of that agency. Data systems are often highly specialized, developed with the unique needs of agencies in mind, and are constantly evolving due to changes in each respective department. Often times, they are proprietary, making interfacing complicated. It would take years to plan and consolidate all these essential and specialized systems into a single system – if a compatible method of doing so could even be found – and the reality is, such a system would likely be obsolete before it was even implemented. In addition, the cost over time would be prohibitive, and a waste of resources and taxpayer funds for something that can be accomplished in a more efficient manner.

The existing IJIS and the Master Name Index (MNI) project of the Criminal Justice Data Committee (CJDC) allows the matching of client data housed in the individual systems and preparation of reports based on matched data. This system has been used to develop the data dashboards and meet the data needs of the departments who are participating. Each agency is responsible for its own data dictionary, and is able to define the specific data that will be shared. This mechanism is more compatible with information technology best practices, which allows agencies to protect their client data as required by individual agency mandates, and yet match data where that data exists and can be shared.

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Finding 2

The Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office, Santa Barbara County District Attorney, Santa Barbara County Public Defender, Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness, and Santa Barbara County Probation Department need a data analyst to organize and retrieve data for a consolidated criminal justice data system.

The Santa Barbara County District Attorney partially agrees. As discussed in our response to Finding 1, the CJDC IJIS/MNI project negates the need to implement a consolidated criminal justice data system. As to the need for a data analyst, the District Attorney's Office agrees there is a continued need to increase data integrity and reporting capabilities throughout the Criminal Justice System.

The Community Corrections Partnership has provided funding for a Probation Department data analyst position dedicated to the coordination of data requests through the MNI project. Although this is a needed step in the right direction, it does not address the unique data reporting requirements and associated workload demands at the District Attorney's Office. The District Attorney's Office has a critical business need for a data analyst to increase data integrity and reporting capabilities. The District Attorney's Office outlined these needs through an FY21-22 budget expansion request. Funding for the budget expansion request has been approved by the County Board of Supervisors and set-aside by the County CEO's Office, pending further review. The District Attorney's Office encourages the County to complete the review process and release the set-aside funds to address the critical need for increased data integrity, analysis and reporting capabilities. We must be prepared to provide aggregate data to the public, the courts, and our criminal justice partners.

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