

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JOHN T. SAVRNOCH
District Attorney



KELLY A. DUNCAN
Assistant District Attorney

SONIA E. BALLESTE
Chief Deputy District Attorney

ANNE C. NUDSON
Chief Deputy District Attorney

MEGAN RHEINSCHILD
Victim-Witness Assistance Program
Director

JENNIFER KARAPETIAN
Chief Deputy District Attorney

KRISTINA PERKINS
Chief Investigator

MICHAEL SODERMAN
Chief Financial & Administrative
Officer

September 13, 2023

The Honorable Pauline Maxwell
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Santa Barbara

Foreperson
2022-2023 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Santa Barbara Courthouse

Dear Presiding Judge Maxwell and Foreperson Eva Macias:

Enclosed please find the response from the Office of the District Attorney regarding the June 2023 Grand Jury Report entitled *A Vicious Cycle – Incarceration of the Severely Mentally Ill*.

Sincerely,

John T. Savrnoch
District Attorney

cc: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Santa Barbara County Executive Officer Mona Miyasato
Santa Barbara County Assistant County Executive Officer Tanja Heitman
Santa Barbara County District Attorney Executive Staff

Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office
Response to the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury 2022-2023 Report
"A Vicious Cycle – Incarceration of the Severely Mentally Ill"

Recommendation 4(a)

That Santa Barbara County work with countywide criminal justice agencies to analyze why the Santa Barbara County Incompetent to Stand Trial caseload is one of the highest in the state.

The Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office agrees with Recommendation 4(a). Santa Barbara County should continue to work with countywide criminal justice agencies to analyze the Santa Barbara County Incompetent to Stand Trial caseload.

The District Attorney currently collaborates with other criminal justice stakeholders through the following work groups related to Incompetent to Stand Trial cases:

1. Department of State Hospital Community Collaboration Stakeholder Workgroup; and
2. Incompetent to Stand Trial Collaborative Group.

Recommendation 4(b)

That the County work closely with the Santa Barbara Superior Court and criminal justice agencies to identify effective community-based treatment programs to reduce Incompetent to Stand Trial orders and Department of State Hospitals commitments.

The Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office agrees with Recommendation 4(b). The County should continue to work closely with the Santa Barbara Superior Court and criminal justice agencies to identify effective community-based treatment programs to reduce Incompetent to Stand Trial orders and Department of State Hospitals commitments when possible.

The District Attorney currently collaborates with criminal justice stakeholders through the following work groups related to Incompetent to Stand Trial cases:

1. Department of State Hospital Community Collaboration Stakeholder Workgroup;
2. Incompetent to Stand Trial Collaborative Group;
3. Rapid Mental Health Diversion Program/Workgroup; and
4. CREDO-47 Diversion Program/Workgroup.
 - a. CREDO-47 is a partnership between the District Attorney, Public Defender, and Behavioral Wellness. It is a pre-arrest and pre-filing program that diverts low-level offenders suffering from substance abuse and/or mental illness. With early intervention, the offender is connected to community-based services and diverted away from the traditional criminal justice system.
5. Collaborative Courts.
 - a. Collaborative Courts help provide services to the unhoused and those suffering from mental illness and/or substance abuse. Collaborative Courts include programs such as Substance Abuse Treatment Court, Mental Health Treatment

Court, Mental Health Diversion Court, Prop-36, Veterans' Treatment Court, High-Risk DUI Court, Incompetent to Stand Trial Court, and Domestic Violence Review Court.

The District Attorney remains committed to collaborating with the Santa Barbara Superior Court, criminal justice agencies, and health and human services agencies to identify effective community-based treatment programs to support individuals suffering from mental illness and/or substance abuse, all with the overarching goal of enhancing public safety within our community.