



San Diego County Sheriff's Department

Post Office Box 939062 • San Diego, California 92193-9062



William D. Gore, Sheriff

July 8, 2013

Honorable Robert J. Trentacosta
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County Courthouse
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Judge Trentacosta:

Response to San Diego County Grand Jury Report: "An Unrecognized Health Hazard in Our Community" Dated May 9, 2013

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933(c), the following is my response to the Grand Jury's Recommendations 13-31, 13-32, 13-33, 13-34, 13-35, 13-36, and 13-37.

DETENTION SERVICES BUREAU (DSB)

FINDINGS

Finding 01: *DSB's current policy and practice fails to meet accepted national immunization standards, including those of the CDC and Federal Bureau of Prisons guidelines for inmates. DSB does not follow the most basic and widely accepted public health standards for women in developed countries.*

Response: The Sheriff's Department disagrees with the finding. The San Diego Sheriff's Department is in compliance with applicable standards – which are found in Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations. Immunizations that are currently offered to jail inmates are consistent with other county jails.

DSB follows basic and widely accepted public health standards for women in developed countries. Female inmates have access to OB/GYN services in the jails which include family planning. It is in the OB/GYN's discretion to order additional immunizations for female inmates.

Finding 02: *DSB's failure to provide effective counseling about the benefits of specific immunizations ensures that the inmates will underutilize the immunization program.*

Response: *The Sheriff's Department disagrees with the finding. Inmates are provided influenza vaccination information and have ample opportunity for vaccination counseling through easily-accessible medical services.*

Finding 03: *DSB's failure to track immunizations using the CAIR-SDIR system increases the cost of tracking and causes delays in evaluating inmate immunization status and in implementing an effective immunization program.*

Response: The Sheriff's Department disagrees with the finding. The Sheriff maintains and tracks immunization information in its Jail Information Management System ("JIMS"). There is no increased cost or delay caused by using JIMS rather than CAIR-SDIR.

Finding 04: *Developing a robust program for DSB will be very complicated. It will require training and input from multiple sources and disciplines to identify workable logistics.*

Response: The Sheriff's Department agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2012-2013 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Sheriff by January 1, 2014:

13-27: Develop a robust catch-up immunization program for the County jails using recommendations from the CDC, SDPHD, Medical Services Division County Jails and the Federal Bureau of Prisons guidelines.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The current immunization practice in the county jails will be expanded as part of a preventive medicine program. The program is based on recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Task Force and is gender and age specific. While these services are outside the recommendations made by the Grand Jury, the program was designed considering the following factors: changes in length of stay and local sentencing, aging population and overall associated health risks of sentenced inmates remaining in custody for over one year and ages 40 and over. The inmates falling in this category will be offered the following immunizations: Tdap (ages 18-60), Td (over age 60), annual influenza, Pneumonvax (65 and over), and Zoster (65 and over).

13-28: Develop a counseling program to educate and promote the benefits of immunizations among inmates. Provide information for inmates to share with their visitors. Discuss the benefits of preventing sexually transmitted diseases through immunization for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and for those under 26 for HPV.

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented beginning January 2014. Information regarding the benefits of additional immunizations in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases through Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C will be included in a pamphlet that will be given to all inmates upon medical screening. Currently, immunizations for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C are given to inmates pursuant to a doctor's recommendation and orders. These immunizations will continue to be offered voluntarily and if medically indicated as determined by the treating physician.

The proposed preventive medicine plan will allow for all sentenced female inmates remaining in custody for over one year and who are between the ages of 18-26 will be offered the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) immunization series.

Classes on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) which are presently offered at the Las Colinas Detention Facility where female inmates are housed will be expanded to include similar training in the other facilities housing male inmates.

13-29: In partnership with SDPHD, seek funding from the recently released CDC grant to expand testing of Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, and to increase earlier diagnosis and linkage to care, treatment and preventive services.

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented beginning in August 2013. The Sheriff's Department will collaborate with the San Diego County Public Health Services to seek funding and grant opportunities from CDC for the expanded testing of Hepatitis B and C for jail inmates.

13-30: Training from SDPHD, begin use of CAIR- SDIR to enter and review immunizations as part of the Federal Government's Meaningful Use program by July 1, 2013.

Response: The Sheriff responds to this recommendation in two parts.

First, with respect to entering or inputting immunization information into CAIR-SDIR, this recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Sheriff uses the JIMS as set described in the response to Finding 03.

Second, with respect to reviewing immunization information, i.e., using CAIR-SDIR as a source of information, this recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented by January 2014. The Sheriff's Department has contacted Public Health Services Epidemiology and Immunization Services and initiated the request for access and related training to CAIR-SDIR.

13-31: Establish a goal and plan the steps necessary to provide the CDC recommended screenings and immunizations for all inmates. Expand this goal year by year to achieve an acceptable 90% level of screening and immunization for all adult inmates.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

Our Preventive Medicine Program screens inmates meeting certain established criteria for certain age-related health risks, including needed immunizations.

The criteria are as follows:

- Inmate must be 40 years and above, and
- Inmate has been, or will be in Sheriff's custody for one year or longer.

Immunization of all inmates is not feasible because the Sheriff's Medical Services Division has no way of reliably and consistently collecting the individual medical histories of each inmate. The CAIR-SDIR (immunization database) would not provide sufficient information to determine who is in need of immunization. Additionally, the Sheriff's Department does not have the resources that would be required to implement an immunization plan that would cover all inmates. The mission of the Sheriff's Medical Services Division is to provide necessary medical care to those inmates in Sheriff's custody. A plan of 100% immunization is something that is better suited to those performing public health office functions than jail medical functions.

13-32: Begin the catch-up immunization of sentenced inmates within their first month of custody after sentencing.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Our response to 13-31 discusses the Sheriff's Department's proposed Preventive Medicine Program and who will qualify for it.

Once an inmate is identified as qualifying for the Preventive Medicine Program, it is our plan that the inmate be screened and scheduled for needed immunizations within 1-3 months of identification.

13-33: In compliance with CDC recommendations, immunize pregnant inmates against Hepatitis B and Tdap within their first month of custody after sentencing.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. With respect to Tdap, all pregnant inmates at their first obstetrical visit will be offered the Tdap vaccine, and strongly encouraged by medical staff to accept the vaccine. With respect to Hepatitis B, the Sheriff's Department will not offer pregnant women the Hepatitis B vaccine because we are advised against doing so by the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Guidelines for Vaccinating Pregnant Women (2013).

13-34: Provide Tdap vaccine to all inmates except those identified as being immune compromised.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The explanation therefore is set forth in our response to 13-31.

13-35: In compliance with CDC recommendations, vaccinate with MMR all non-pregnant women who report never having received an MMR vaccine as an adult.

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. Sheriff's Medical Services Division staff intends to meet with the County Public Health Officer to determine whether or not to implement this recommendation. The analysis will be completed by November 9, 2013.

13-36: In compliance with the recent CDC recommendations, screen all inmates born between 1945 and 1965 for Hepatitis C.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The explanation therefore is partially set forth in our response to 13-31.

In addition, there are certain elements of Hepatitis C treatment that are ill-suited to a pre-trial correctional facility. Most significantly, Hepatitis C treatment impairs cognitive functions, which could significantly affect an inmate's presentation at trial. Absent clinical symptoms and/or findings, it is not feasible to screen all inmates born between 1945 and 1965 for Hepatitis C.

13-37: Screen all inmates for HIV.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The explanation therefore is set forth in our response to 13-31.

The Sheriff's Department has partnered with the County Offices of AIDS Coordination and Public Health Services to utilize grant money in voluntarily testing jail inmates for HIV. Grant money has included the case management and orchestration of treatment for those individuals that test positive for HIV. This has been well-received and the Sheriff's Department is committed to work with our public health partners to seek and pursue additional funding to continue the program. Currently, individuals requesting HIV testing can self-refer and receive their results in a confidential manner.

July 8, 2013

Page 6 of 7

In closing, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their efforts in working with the Sheriff's Department through this investigation and for recognizing the many obstacles to immunizing adult inmates. Pursuant to the Grand Jury's recommendations, the Sheriff's Department Detention Services Bureau has a goal and planned the steps necessary to phase in additional screenings and expand immunizations for inmates over a period of time.

The success of this program will require ongoing management, as well as continued collaboration with Public Health Services and other community health agencies to link inmates to services after their incarceration period. The prevention of communicable diseases in our detention facilities and community is a shared responsibility. The essential collaboration with the Office of Public Health and the pursuit of creative funding to immunize the adult inmate population is of paramount consideration.

Sincerely,



William D. Gore, Sheriff

WDG/bl

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Helen Robbins-Meyer, CAO
Thomas J. Pastuszka, Clerk of the Board
Paul C. Christian, Foreman, San Diego County Grand Jury