

**CITIZENS' LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW BOARD  
POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

**USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO MONITOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PEOPLE IN CUSTODY AT  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY DETENTION FACILITIES**

**BACKGROUND:**

From 2006 through 2020, 185 people died in San Diego County's jails. The rate of deaths in San Diego County's jails raised concerns about underlying systemic issues within the San Diego Sheriff's Department's (SDSD) policies, procedures, and practices. The California State Auditor (CSA) conducted an audit of the SDSD to determine the reasons for in-custody deaths; concluded that the SDSD failed to adequately prevent and respond to deaths of individuals in its custody; and made several recommendations pertaining to intake screenings, medical and mental health care, safety checks, and responses to medical emergencies.

Not included in the CSA's recommendations was to consider using existing or new technology to identify and subsequently aid inmates who may be in medical distress. As of this writing, there are at least two existing devices currently in use for the purpose of monitoring the health and safety of incarcerated individuals and alerting detention facility staff of possible health issues, thus allowing for early intervention.

- One device, in use at sheriff's offices in Arkansas and Oklahoma, consists of a band placed on a person's wrist or ankle that monitors the heart rate. At this stage of its deployment, it is used on persons who have known medical issues or are detoxing from drugs or alcohol.
- Another device, in use at a police department in England, consists of a high-tech camera inside of a cell that monitors an inmate's movement, pulse, and breathing.

CLERB believes that all efforts to reduce the likelihood of in-custody deaths must be taken, to include those that would appear fiscally cost prohibitive, and/or for unknown reasons, unlikely to be implemented or successful. The financial cost of implementing or, at a minimum, initiating a pilot project involving new technology will be costly, however, CLERB believes the value of human life outweighs any cost.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Pursuant to Section 340.9(g) of the San Diego County Administrative Code, the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB) shall have the authority to review and make recommendations on policies and procedures of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and San Diego County Probation Department. As such, CLERB makes the following policy recommendations to the SDSD:

1. Research, and publicly report the results of its research efforts, i.e., associated costs, technology considered, reasons for not implementing, if applicable, etc., the use of technological devices to identify and subsequently aid inmates who may be in medical distress.
2. Incorporate into policy the use of technological devices to identify and subsequently aid inmates who may be in medical distress.

Submitted by:	Date:	Reviewed by:	Date:
	03-28-22		03-28-22
Paul R. Parker III, Executive Officer		Lynn Setzler, Supervising Special Investigator	