



SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Kelly A. Martinez, Sheriff

Rich Williams, Undersheriff

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August 1, 2025

The Honorable Maureen F. Hallahan
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
San Diego Central Courthouse
1100 Union Street, Tenth Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

R E C E I V E D

AUG 08 2025

PRESIDING

Dear Presiding Judge Hallahan,

San Diego County Sheriff's Office Response to the Grand Jury Report:
"Performance Indicators Displayed on a Publicly Accessible Dashboard May Be Beneficial in Lowering Death Rate in Jails"

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933(c), the San Diego County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office or SDSO) respectfully submits the following response to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations R-01 through R-05 as outlined in the 2024/2025 Grand Jury Report.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

We greatly appreciate the Grand Jury's continued commitment to improving government agencies such as ours and value their in-depth analysis and thoughtful recommendations, which help guide our ongoing efforts to enhance transparency, accountability, and the care provided to those in our custody.

Over the past several years, the Sheriff's Office has implemented significant reforms throughout the detention system, resulting in measurable and sustained improvements. Notably, the Sheriff's Office achieved the lowest in-custody death rate in 2024, which marked the lowest annual rate in more than a decade. Additionally, there were no in-custody suicides in 2024, the first time in more than twenty years. A milestone that reflects the SDSO's commitment to safety and wellness.

The Grand Jury identified five findings as part of their report. Please refer below for the Sheriff's Office's responses to these findings.

Grand Jury Finding 01:

Performance indicators of jail functioning presented in a dashboard display accessible to the public over the internet improve jail functioning and promotes transparency and

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accountability.

Response: The San Diego Sheriff's Office disagrees partially with the finding.

Significant improvements to jail functioning have occurred for several years without the use of a public dashboard. Internal and external accountability and review processes continue to drive positive change throughout the Sheriff's Detention Services Bureau (DSB). A public dashboard, however, would promote added transparency.

Grand Jury Finding 02:

SDSO lacks performance indicators of medical/mental health services requests displayed in a dashboard accessible to the public which, if implemented, should improve response time to requests for services and decrease health acuity and deaths.

Response: The San Diego Sheriff's Office wholly disagrees with the finding.

The Sheriff's Office already employs several performance indicators which are described in Sheriff's Medical Services Division (MSD) Policy S.3. Additionally, MSD policy created the Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) Committee, which meets on a quarterly basis to identify areas of improvement. There is insufficient evidence to support the finding that a publicly accessible dashboard displaying performance indicators of medical/mental health services requests would "improve response time to requests for services and decrease health acuity and deaths."

Grand Jury Finding 03:

No metrics are being collected by the SDSO to be used as performance indicators for CQI [Continuous Quality Improvement] purposes targeting MAT programming which, if implemented, may decrease mortality and high-risk behaviors and move individuals toward recovery.

Response: The Sheriff's Office wholly disagrees with the finding.

The Sheriff's Office has implemented performance metrics for the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program and these performance measures are reported regularly, to include quarterly reporting to the Medical Services Division (MSD) Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) Committee. To strengthen existing monitoring practices, the Sheriff's Office will implement performance measures outlined in the recommended resource, cited in the Grand Jury Report, *Medication-Assisted Treatment for*

Opioid Use Disorder in Jails and Prisons: A Planning and Implementation Toolkit,
published by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

Grand Jury Finding 04:

SDSO does not collect metrics targeting grievances for CQI purposes, which if implemented, could provide management with a review of SDSO policies, conditions, or omissions that have an adverse effect on the health, safety, and welfare of incarcerated person.

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

The Sheriff's Jail Information Management System (JIMS) currently lacks the ability to track grievance CQI metrics across the entire Detention Services Bureau. The Sheriff's Office is exploring options to update and/or replace the JIMS system. As part of that process, the Sheriff's Office will include the ability to collect metrics targeting grievances for CQI purposes as a consideration in the update and/or procurement process.

Grand Jury Finding 05:

SDSO does not have metrics that can be used as performance indicators for CQI purposes targeting safety checks which, if implemented, could improve deputy compliance to conducting meaningful safety checks thus decreasing both medical distress and crime occurring in the jails.

Response: The Sheriff's Office disagrees partially with the finding.

The Sheriff's Office already employs performance indicators for safety checks which are identified in Detention Services Bureau Policy I.64. I.64 also contains direction for monthly audits to be completed by each facility commander. While the Sheriff's Office agrees compliance and audit mechanisms can be enhanced, there is insufficient evidence to support a finding that performance indicators for CQI purposes targeting safety checks would "improve deputy compliance to conducting meaningful safety checks," let alone that such would result in "decreasing both medical distress and crime occurring in the jails." Currently, DSB Policy I.64 is under review with multiple proposed revisions to include additional oversight and executive level review of audits by both the Detention Services Bureau Facilities Commander and Assistant Sheriff.

Below are the San Diego Sheriff's Office's responses to the Grand Jury recommendations.

Recommendation R-01

Develop system-wide jail metrics to be used as performance indicators for CQI purposes targeting incarcerated persons' requests for medical/mental health services.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

The Sheriff's Office already utilizes internal metrics to monitor and assess medical and mental health service requests submitted by individuals in custody as outlined in SDSO MSD Policy MSD.S.3. In alignment with the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) Standard J-E-07, California Code of Regulations Title 15 § 1202, and SDSO MSD Policy MSD.S.3, these metrics are being formalized and expanded into a standardized reporting structure designed to support system-wide performance monitoring, promote public transparency, and advance continuous quality improvement efforts.

Performance indicators related to access to care and timeliness are being further refined in accordance with MSD Policy MSD.S.3 – *Non-Emergent Healthcare Requests and Sick Call*, which reflects NCCHC J-E-07 standards. Currently, healthcare requests are submitted by incarcerated individuals and collected daily by healthcare staff from housing units. Each request is reviewed by a Registered Nurse (RN), who assesses for acuity and prioritizes based on clinical urgency. Individuals are to receive a face-to-face clinical encounter with an RN within 24 hours of request submission. As digital tablets are deployed across all facilities over the next 12–16 months, this process will transition to a fully digital format.

SDSO's broader CQI framework is guided by Medical Services Division Policy A.6.1, which establishes an Office-wide approach to quality improvement. This includes quarterly Quality Improvement Committee (QIC) meetings, performance benchmarking, health record audits, and outcome-based evaluations. Each metric is tied to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as accessibility, timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and patient safety. If performance falls below established thresholds, a structured root cause analysis is conducted, followed by the development and implementation of a corrective action plan. Progress is continuously monitored until sustained improvement is achieved.

All metrics and findings are reviewed quarterly by the MSD Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) Committee. This multidisciplinary committee includes correctional healthcare leadership, custody command staff, medical and mental health providers, compliance officers, and administrative personnel. The committee ensures data-informed decision-making, identifies system-level deficiencies, and supports coordinated strategies to enhance the quality of care across all SDSO detention facilities.

In support of the Grand Jury's recommendation and as part of SDSO's transparency efforts, the Sheriff's Office is developing a public-facing webpage that will highlight key indicators related to medical and mental health service delivery within our jails. This

initiative will allow the public to view and understand SDSO's performance metrics and continuous improvement efforts, even as the Sheriff's Office works toward longer-term technical solutions such as an integrated dashboard display.

Recommendation R-02

Develop system-wide jail metrics to be used as performance indicators for CQI purposes targeting MAT programming.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

The Sheriff's Office has already established performance metrics for the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program and recognizes the value of further strengthening these efforts. In alignment with the Grand Jury's recommendation, SDSO will enhance its existing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework by incorporating additional best practices and performance indicators.

To support this initiative, SDSO will implement the *Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Jails and Prisons: A Planning and Implementation Toolkit*, published by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and referenced in the Grand Jury Report. This resource includes recommended data elements, evaluation templates, and sample formulas to assess the effectiveness of MAT programs in correctional settings.

Using the toolkit as a foundation, SDSO will refine its data collection, auditing, and reporting processes in coordination with contracted healthcare providers and IT partners. These enhanced performance indicators will be reviewed during monthly meetings and reported quarterly to the Medical Services Division (MSD) Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) Committee. Full integration of these improvements is expected within six months.

Recommendation R-03

Develop system-wide jail metrics to be used as performance indicators for CQI purposes targeting incarcerated persons' grievances.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a targeted completion date of July 2026.

The Sheriff's Office concurs with the Grand Jury's recommendation to establish formal performance indicators to support Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in the management of incarcerated person grievances. Currently, processes and technology

improvements are underway to create a digital tracking and CQI mechanism for grievances. These improvements are expected to be fully implemented in 2026.

Developing standardized metrics will enhance SDSO's ability to identify trends, address systemic concerns, and ensure timely and consistent resolution of grievances.

At present, SDSO operates a paper-based grievance process governed by SDSO DSB Policy N.1, which outlines procedures for grievance submission, review, and resolution timelines. Facility staff are responsible for logging, tracking, and responding to grievances in accordance with policy requirements. Supervisors review grievance patterns through regular audits and operational oversight. While this process incorporates basic accountability measures, SDSO acknowledges the need for more comprehensive data analytics, real-time visibility, and system-wide integration.

To modernize and strengthen grievance handling, SDSO is partnering with Smart Communications to implement a digital grievance submission system via handheld tablets. These devices will allow incarcerated individuals to file grievances electronically, enabling immediate submission, real-time tracking, and automated performance monitoring. This digital platform will improve transparency, efficiency, and response oversight across all detention facilities.

Tablets have already been deployed at the East Mesa Reentry Facility, and phased implementation is currently underway at other facilities. Full deployment is contingent upon necessary infrastructure upgrades, including power access, Wi-Fi connectivity, charging stations, and integration with the Jail Information Management System (JIMS).

Full implementation of the Smart Communications tablet system, along with integration of grievance-related performance metrics into SDSO's CQI framework, is expected within the next 12 months. In the interim, SDSO remains committed to ensuring accountability and responsiveness through the continued enforcement of policy-driven procedures and supervisory oversight.

Recommendation R-04

Develop metrics to be used as performance indicators for CQI purposes targeting safety checks and the review of all safety checks by every level of command. These metrics shall be developed using aggregate data throughout the jail system.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented in the future, with a targeted completion date of October 2025.

The Sheriff's Office agrees with the Grand Jury's recommendation to develop performance indicators that support Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in the conduct and oversight of safety checks. Establishing standardized, system-wide metrics will improve SDSO's ability to monitor compliance, identify trends, and address operational deficiencies in a timely and effective manner. SDSO DSB Policy I.64 is currently under review and revision, with an anticipated completion date of October 2025.

Recommendation R-05

Implement a CQI dashboard display available to the public on the SDSO website. This dashboard shall include the following four jail functions.

- *Incarcerated persons' requests for medical and mental health services*
- *Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder*
- *Incarcerated persons' grievances*
- *Safety checks*

The dashboard should also include jail functions that have both custodial and healthcare functions.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis.

The Sheriff's Office supports the Grand Jury's recommendation to improve transparency by providing the public with access to key jail performance metrics. While SDSO agrees with the intent to implement a public-facing CQI dashboard, several technical limitations currently impact our ability to consolidate real-time data across multiple systems. Performance data related to healthcare and custody functions are stored in separate platforms, which present challenges in creating an integrated, interactive dashboard in the near term.

Despite these limitations, SDSO is actively working to improve external reporting mechanisms. A comprehensive quarterly CQI report is currently in development and will be published on the SDSO public website within the next six months. This report will serve the purpose of enhancing transparency and public understanding of jail system performance as we work towards system integrations for the purpose of an interactive dashboard.

Conclusion

The San Diego County Sheriff's Office remains committed to continuous improvement and transparency in detention operations. We recognize the importance of external oversight and welcome the insights provided by the Grand Jury, which support our shared goal of enhancing safety, accountability, and the delivery of constitutionally adequate care. While

we acknowledge there is still work to be done, we are proud of the progress made and will continue to build upon these efforts. We thank the Grand Jury for its thorough review and constructive recommendations, which serve as a valuable resource in advancing the mission of the San Diego Sheriff's Office and the well-being of those entrusted to our care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly A. Martinez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kelly" written in a stylized, somewhat abbreviated manner.

Kelly A. Martinez, Sheriff

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Ebony Shelton, Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Potter, Executive Officer, Clerk of the Board
James Tuck, Foreperson, 2024/2025 San Diego Grand Jury