



**CLUE/LWV Criminal Justice Reform Workgroup
Recommendations to Improve Jail Healthcare**

Presented April 3, 2024, at Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Study Session

On April 3, 2024, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors held a study session to examine and hear community members' concerns and recommendations about healthcare in our jails. The Session included presentations from County departments and members of our CLUE/LWV Workgroup: Larry Severance, Maureen Earls, and Pam Flynt Tambo. Peter Brown offered public comment recommendations and Lizzie Rodriguez provided technical assistance.

Three County Supervisors were present. Supervisors Das Williams, Laura Capps, and Joan Hartmann attended. Supervisors Bob Nelson and Steve Lavagnino were not in attendance.

Larry Severance offered 7 recommendations to improve jail healthcare that will also increase public health and safety.

- 1) Assure accurate intake assessments with swift diversion referrals for low-risk individuals.
- 2) Prioritize transportation to medical appointments in a confidential setting.
- 3) Increase oversight of Wellpath, the jail healthcare provider, with financial consequences for shortfalls in staffing or services.
- 4) Provide adequate mental health treatment.
- 5) Expand Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) with improved overdose monitoring.
- 6) Set contractual requirements for re-entry to community-based resources for improved long-term outcomes and reduced recidivism.
- 7) Reduce jail population to lessen jail healthcare needs and improve delivery of services.



Pam Flynt Tambo urged an evidence-based recommendation, that all jail custodial deputies and all Wellpath clinical staff, be thoroughly trained in Crisis Intervention.



The County's contract with Wellpath must specify staffing levels and healthcare service requirements and mandate use of an accountability monitoring tool to ensure compliance. Pam noted: "Short staffing results in poor services and poor responses to a mental health crisis." It is critical that fiscal consequences are in place if these requirements are not met.

Maureen Earls focused on court-ordered Remedial Plan requirements, following a 2017 federal lawsuit alleging Santa Barbara County and its Sheriff's office failed "... to provide minimally adequate medical and mental health care to people in our jails."

Data this year from Behavioral Wellness shows harm to people in our jail continues from lack of full compliance. She recommended Supervisors require increased County staff oversight be written into Wellpath's contract renewal this month, with new quarterly reports on compliance. Maureen stated: "We can all agree that every Santa Barbara community member – including people in County jail – deserves quality medical and mental health care." This was met with a noticeable round of applause.





The meeting was well attended and red scarves representing CLUE supporters were in abundance. CLUE Board Members Wayne Mellinger, Diane Fox, Gene Michaels, and Emiliano Campobello were in attendance along with Advisory Board Members Reverend Dr. David Moore and Reverend Julia Hamilton. Rev. Hamilton offered a passionate public comment reminding Supervisors to focus on the actual, individual human impacts underlying aggregate data. League members Ruth Ackerman, Susan Horne, and Joanie Jones were also in attendance. Thank you to everyone who took time out of their day to attend this important meeting.

Next Steps: County staff will summarize recommendations in an update to the Supervisors and the Criminal Justice Reform Workgroup will also issue their statement of recommendations. County budget hearings will take place on April 9th, 10th, and 12th, where Criminal Justice Reform Workgroup members will provide testimony on prioritized funding allocations. The Wellpath contract renewal will be presented for a vote by the Board of Supervisors on April 23rd. Look for additional Action Alerts coming soon.

Submitted by Lizzie Rodriguez, CLUE Criminal Justice Reform Workgroup Facilitator

