

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The Nevada County Grand Jury has the responsibility to review county departments, programs, and processes to determine if they are meeting the needs of the community. This report is a follow up on actions that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) indicated they would initiate in response to the 2000-2001 report on the Behavioral Health Department. That report can be found at: www.courts.co.nevada.ca.us/reports.htm

PROCEDURE FOLLOWED

The Grand Jury interviewed the Nevada County Human Services Director, the Behavioral Health Director, the Behavioral Health Medical Director, and members of the Behavioral Health Department.

FINDINGS

1. In 2001, the BOS hired Robert Erickson as Director of Behavioral Health and Douglas Crisp, M.D., as Medical Director of Behavioral Health. In the interval since Mr. Erickson and Dr. Crisp were hired, the time clients wait for an appointment to see a psychiatrist has been reduced from as much as six weeks to approximately one week. In addition, group therapy has been restructured to accommodate specific disorders.
2. The Behavioral Health Department moved to a team concept emphasizing improvement of communications between doctors and staff, concerning their patients. These new policies allow Behavioral Health to better track their clients and have the potential to diminish hospitalization of patients.
3. Budget constraints limit crisis services outside normal business hours. Clients in crisis must use local medical facilities that may not be equipped to handle psychiatric emergencies. The local facility contacts one of the on-call county mental health crisis workers to assist the client.
4. Space for clients who require hospitalization is very limited. Nevada County does not have a crisis stabilization facility.
5. There is insufficient space at the Health, Education, and Welfare building to accommodate the entire staff of the Behavioral Healthy Department. A modular building was added to provide more space, but the modular is under court order to be removed by August 1, 2004.

6. On December 5, 2001, there were two unfilled positions in the Behavioral Health Department. Personnel class and compensation adjustments have resulted in an increase of qualified applicants.
7. The BOS increased General Fund appropriation to the Behavioral Health Department in fiscal year 2001-2002 from the state mandated \$30,893 to \$61,893.
8. The county received a \$400,000 grant from the state to fund a three-year pilot program to expand mental health treatment.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Grand Jury commends the county for hiring Mr. Erickson and Dr. Crisp. This has resulted in improved management/staff relationships at the Behavioral Health Department. Additional facilities must be found prior to the deadline for removal of the Behavioral Health modular.
2. Nevada County needs a crisis stabilization facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Behavioral Health Director should continue to seek increased funds to support the county's population growth.
2. The BOS should continue to support Behavioral Health services by at least maintaining the fiscal year 2001-2002 General Fund allocation of \$61,893.
3. The Grand Jury strongly recommends that the BOS support effort to secure an adequate facility to house Behavioral Health and all other departments of the Human Services Agency.
4. The BOS and the Human Services Agency should actively pursue the establishment of a crisis stabilization facility.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Board of Supervisors due by June 1, 2002

Human Services Agency Director due by May 1, 2002

Behavioral Health Director due by May 1, 2002

**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESPONSES TO
2001-2002 CIVIL GRAND JURY INTERIM REPORT NO. 3
DATED FEBRUARY 26, 2002
RE: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Responses to findings and recommendations are based on either personal knowledge, examination of official county records, review of the responses by the Director of the Human Services Agency, and the Department of Behavioral Health, or testimony from the board chairman and county staff members.

I. GRAND JURY INVESTIGATION:

Behavioral Health Department

A. RESPONSE TO FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings:

1. **In 2001, the BOS hired Robert Erickson as Director of Behavioral Health and Douglas Crisp, M.D., as Medical Director of Behavioral Health. In the interval since Mr. Erickson and Dr. Crisp were hired, the time clients wait for an appointment to see a psychiatrist has been reduced from as much as six weeks to approximately one week. In addition, group therapy has been restructured to accommodate specific disorders.**

Agree

2. **The Behavioral Health Department moved to a team concept emphasizing improvement of communications between doctors and staff, concerning their patients. These new policies allow Behavioral Health to better track their clients and have the potential to diminish hospitalization of patients.**

Agree

3. **Budget constraints limit crisis services outside of normal business hours. Clients in crisis must use local medical facilities that may not be equipped to handle psychiatric emergencies. The local facility contacts one of the on-call county mental health crisis workers to assist the client.**

Agree

This is a normal situation in most relatively small rural counties. Few counties of a similar size have local inpatient or crisis stabilization facilities. Most after-hour client evaluations are conducted in hospital emergency rooms, but if a psychiatric emergency cannot be adequately handled at a local medical facility, the patient is transported to the nearest crisis stabilization facility that can provide the needed services.

- 4. Space for clients who require hospitalization is very limited. Nevada County does not have a crisis stabilization facility.**

Agree

Behavioral Health clients who need inpatient services are sent to psychiatric health facilities outside of Nevada County. The county presently has contracts with about 10 such facilities in Placer, El Dorado, Sacramento, Napa, and other counties.

- 5. There is insufficient space at the Health, Education, and Welfare building to accommodate the entire staff of the Behavioral Health Department. A modular building was added to provide more space, but the modular is under court order to be removed by August 1, 2004. A space planning study has been initiated to consolidate Behavioral Health and all other Human Services agencies in one location.**

Agree

A Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit bids for a new location and consolidated facility has been issued and replies are due July 8, 2002. (See response to Recommendation No. 3)

- 6. On December 5, 2001, there were two unfilled positions in the Behavioral Health Department. Personnel class and compensation adjustments have resulted in an increase of qualified applicants.**

Agree.

The two unfilled positions under recruitment in the Behavioral Health Department are for a Behavioral Health Worker and a Health Technician in the Mental Health Department.

- 7. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) increased General Fund appropriation to the Behavioral Health Department in fiscal year 2001-2002 from the state mandated \$30,893 to \$61,893.**

Agree

- 8. The county received a \$400,000 grant from the state to fund a three-year pilot program to expand mental health treatment.**

Agree

The county has already received most of the \$400,000 from the state and the remaining payment should not be impacted by the budget shortfall for FY 2002-03. There are also no matching funds required to be provided by the county for this project.

The funds will be used to add two additional professionals to the Behavioral Health adult programs staff to focus on treatment of dual diagnosis (substance dependency/mental illness) clients.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Behavioral Health Director should continue to seek increased funds to support the county's population growth.**

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Board of Supervisors has directed the County Executive Officer and the Director of the Behavioral Health Department to identify and justify resources needed from the General Fund or other discretionary funding sources to meet increased client service needs. All funding requests will be considered during the FY 2002-2003 and subsequent budget year appropriation processes. Emergency requests for additional funding will be immediately considered if the need arises.

The County Executive Officer and the Director of the Behavioral Health Department have also been directed to continue to seek supplemental funding for Behavioral Health services through legislation, grant funding, and other sources.

- 2. The BOS should continue to support Behavioral Health services by at least maintaining the fiscal year 2001-2002 General Fund allocation of \$61,893.**

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Board of Supervisors Budget Subcommittee has recommended the Behavioral Health Department receive \$111,893 from the General Fund for FY 2002-2003. This compares to the appropriation of \$61,893 from the General Fund for FY 2001-2002, and is an 80% increase in General Fund support. The Board of Supervisors final General Fund appropriation for the department will be determined during the FY 2002-2003 Budget Hearings on June 3 and 4, 2002.

3. The Grand Jury strongly recommends that the BOS support efforts to secure an adequate facility to house Behavioral Health and all other departments of the Human Services Agency.

The recommendation to support efforts to secure an adequate facility for Behavioral Health and other Human Services Agency departments has been implemented. The implied intent of the Grand Jury recommendation will be fully implemented when the facilities are actually acquired.

The Board of Supervisors previously directed the County Executive Officer to prepare a comprehensive facilities plan to address present and future county facility needs. This effort is presently underway and will address the consolidation of Human Service Agency departments and services, including the Behavioral Health Department.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued by the County Executive Officer to solicit requests to site and build an approximate 70,000 sq ft facility to house Human Service Agency departments and services. Replies are due July 8, 2002. It is estimated that it will take a minimum of 18 months from when bids are received until a new facility will be ready for occupancy.

4. The BOS and the Human Services Agency should actively pursue the establishment of a crisis stabilization facility.

The recommendation requires further analysis to be completed by November 30, 2002.

The establishment of a crisis stabilization facility in Nevada County is a desirable goal but does not appear to be possible without a stable and reliable funding source. The director of Behavioral Health has completed a detailed financial analysis that indicates it will cost approximately \$400K per year to staff a crisis stabilization facility that meets all state requirements. This figure does not include start-up and facility acquisition costs. Securing the necessary funding will require a collaborative regional partnership with other counties and consistent annual funding from the state through appropriations, grants, and other funding sources.

The County Executive Officer, Human Services Agency Director, and the Director of Behavioral Health will continue to evaluate the proposal to establish such a facility in relation to actual and projected client needs, collaborative opportunities with other counties, and possible funding options. The County Executive Officer will present a report to the Board by November 30, 2002 with recommendations for the Board's consideration.

B. OTHER RESPONSES REQUIRED:

Board of Supervisors – June 1, 2002
Director, Human Services Agency – May 1, 2002
Director, Behavioral Health Services – May 1, 2002



**NEVADA COUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES
AGENCY**

PHYLLIS L. MURDOCK
Director
Behavioral Health Director:
Robert Erickson, LCSW, MPA
Behavioral Health Medical
Director: Douglas Crisp, M.D.

**DEPARTMENT OF
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

10433 WILLOW VALLEY ROAD, STE . A

NEVADA CITY CALIFORNIA 95959

TELEPHONE (530) 265-1437
FAX (530) 265-7065

April 1, 2002

REC'D BY SUPERIOR COURT
DATE: 4-2-02
BY: [Signature]

The Honorable Ersel Edwards
201 Church Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

Dear Judge Edwards:

The following is my response to the Report of the Civil Grand Jury, published March 1, 2002 with respect to the Behavioral Health Department.

FINDINGS

1. In 2001, the BOS hired Robert Erickson as Director of Behavioral Health and Douglas Crisp, M.D., as Medical Director of Behavioral Health. In the interval since Mr. Erickson and Dr. Crisp were hired, the time clients wait for an appointment to see a psychiatrist has been reduced from as much as six weeks to approximately one week. In addition, group therapy has been restructured to accommodate specific disorders.

I agree with the finding.

2. The Behavioral Health Department moved to a team concept emphasizing improvement of communications between doctors and staff, concerning their patients. These new policies allow Behavioral Health to better track their clients and have the potential to diminish hospitalization of patients.

I agree with the finding.

3. Budget constraints limit crisis services outside of normal business hours. Clients in crisis must use local medical facilities that may not be equipped to handle psychiatric emergencies. The local facility contacts one of the on-call county mental health crisis workers to assist the client.

I agree with the finding.

4. Space for clients who require hospitalization is very limited. Nevada County does not have a crisis stabilization facility.

I agree with the finding.

5. There is insufficient space at the Health, Education, and Welfare building to accommodate the entire staff of the Behavioral Health Department. A modular building was added to provide more space, but the modular is under court order to be removed by August 1, 2004. A space planning study has been initiated to consolidate Behavioral Health and all other Human Services agencies in one location.

I agree with the finding.

6. On December 5, 2001, there were two unfilled positions in the Behavioral Health Department. Personnel class and compensation adjustments have resulted in an increase of qualified applicants.

I agree with the finding.

7. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) increased General Fund appropriation to the Behavioral Health Department in fiscal year 2001-2002 from the state mandated \$30,893 to \$61,893.

I agree with the finding.

8. The county received a \$400,000 grant from the state to fund a three-year pilot program to expand mental health treatment.

I agree with the finding.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Grand Jury commends the county for hiring Mr. Erickson and Dr. Crisp. This has resulted in improved management/staff relationships at the Behavioral Health Department.

2. Additional facilities must be found prior to the deadline for removal of the Behavioral Health modular.
3. Nevada County needs a crisis stabilization facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Behavioral Health Director should continue to seek increased funds to support the county's population growth.

The recommendation will be acted upon on a continuous, opportunistic, basis.

2. The BOS should continue to support Behavioral Health services by at least maintaining the fiscal year 2001-2002 General Fund allocation of \$61,893.

While this recommendation is beyond my authority, it is my understanding that this will also be recommended by the Chief Executive's Office.

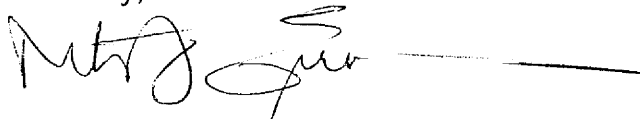
3. The Grand Jury strongly recommends that the BOS support efforts to secure an adequate facility to house Behavioral Health and all other departments of the Human Services Agency.

This recommendation is beyond my authority. It is my understanding that the capital facilities task force is working toward this objective.

4. The BOS and the Human Services Agency should actively pursue the establishment of a crisis stabilization facility.

The recommendation will be acted upon, as an active pursuit. This may turn out to be not financially feasible.

Sincerely,



Robert Erickson, LCSW, MPA
Behavioral Health Director

CC: Phyllis Murdock, Human Services Agency Director
Ted A. Gaebler, Chief Executive Officer

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COUNTY OF NEVADA HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Phyllis L. Murdock
Agency Director

Director:
Art Davis
Veterans Services
Robert Erickson, LCSW, M.P.A.
Behavioral Health Services

Community Health Services
Philip S Reinheimer
Adult & Family Services

950 MAIDU AVE. PO BOX 1210 NEVADA CITY CALIFORNIA 95959 TELEPHONE (530) 265-1340 FAX (530) 265-7120

May 21, 2002

REC'D BY SUPERIOR COURT
DATE: 5-21-02
BY: _____

The Honorable Ersel Edwards
Nevada County Courthouse
Nevada City, Ca 95959

Honorable Judge Edwards:

Enclosed is my response to the report of the Civil Grand Jury a follow-up report to the 2000-01 Grand Jury investigation.

Findings:

1. In 2001, the BOS hired Robert Erickson as Director of Behavioral Health and Douglas Crisp, M.D. as the Medical Director of Behavioral Health. In the interval since Mr. Erickson and Dr. Crisp were hired, the time clients wait for an appointment to see a psychiatrist has been reduced from as much as six weeks to approximately one week. In addition, group therapy has been restructured to accommodate specific disorders.

I agree with the finding

2. The Behavioral Health Department moved to a team concept emphasizing improvement of communications between doctors and staff, concerning their patients. These new policies allow Behavioral Health to better track their clients and have the potential to diminish hospitalization of patients.

I agree with the finding

3. Budget constraints limit crisis services outside of normal business hours. Clients in crisis must use local medical facilities that may not be equipped to handle psychiatric emergencies. The local facility contacts one of the on-call county mental health crisis workers to assist the client.

I agree with the finding

4. Space for clients who require hospitalization is very limited. Nevada County does not have a crisis stabilization facility.

I agree with the finding

5. There is insufficient space at the Health, Education and Welfare building to accommodate the entire staff of the Behavioral Health Department. A modular building was added to provide more space, but the modular is under court order to be removed by August 1, 2004. A space planning study has been initiated to consolidate Behavioral Health and all other Human services in one location.

I agree with the finding, in addition, a Request for Proposal to determine location and cost of this building has been issued and replies are due July 8, 2002.

6. On December 5, 2001, there were two unfilled positions in the Behavioral Health Department. Personnel class and compensation adjustments have resulted in an increase of qualified applicants.

I agree with the finding

7. The Board of Supervisors increased General Fund appropriation to the Behavioral Health Department in fiscal year 2001-02 from the state mandated \$30,893 to \$61,893.

I agree with the finding

8. The county received a \$400,000 grant from the state to fund a three-year pilot program to expand mental health treatment.

I agree with the finding

Recommendations:

1. The Behavioral Health Director should continue to seek increased funds to support the county's population growth.

The recommendation is acted upon primarily in the form of applying for grant opportunities both as a single department and in concert with others.

2. The BOS should continue to support Behavioral Health services by at least maintaining the fiscal year 2001-02 General Fund allocation of \$61,893.

This recommendation has been implemented, the funding amount recommended in the upcoming budget remains at the current level.

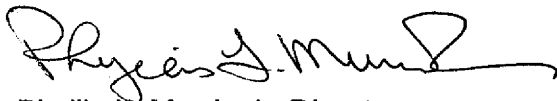
3. The Grand Jury strongly recommends that the BOS support efforts to secure an adequate facility to house Behavioral Health and all other departments of the Human Services Agency.

While not completed, the first steps have been taken in that an RFP (Request for Proposal) has been issued for potential building sites and costs

4. The BOS and the Human Services Agency should actively pursue the establishment of a crisis stabilization facility.

This is a high priority for the agency, however it is not attainable without stable and ongoing funding

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phyllis L. Murdock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phyllis L. Murdock, Director
Human Services Agency

cc: Robert Erickson
Ted Gaebler