

# California State Prison Solano/California Medical Facility 2002-2003 Grand Jury Report

## I. Reason for Investigation

The California State Penal Code §919(b) mandates that the Grand Jury inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the County.

## II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Interviewed the wardens and staff of both facilities
- Inspected the facilities
- Observed on-site health care facilities
- Reviewed vocational and educational programs
- Participated in on-going Youth Diversion/Prisoner Outreach Program

## III. Background

1. The California State Prison Solano in Vacaville was originally designed to house 2,110 inmates but has been reconfigured to house 6,287 inmates through double bunking and other methods. This has created an overcrowded condition. At the time of the inspection, the facility currently houses 5,934 inmates. The facility was clean, well organized and orderly.

2. The Prison provides a comprehensive work-training program for medium security inmates with academic training, vocational training and assignments in various industries within the prison.

3. The Prison Industry Authority (PIA) program offers meaningful work and occupational training for inmates who qualify. This program offers 60 manufacturing and services enterprises such as the manufacture of specialized vehicle equipment for Caltrans, disabled person placards for Department of Motor Vehicles, prescription eye glasses fabrication (450 pairs/day) for MediCal recipients and inmates. The program is totally self-supporting. The sales and revenues of prison goods go toward wages and court-ordered restitution fines and are transferred to the Crime Victims Restitution Fund. No state funds or public tax dollars are used.

4. Inmate programs offered include adult basic education (high school/G.E.D.), English as a second language, literacy program, pre-release program, substance abuse programs, PIA and Youth Diversion/Prisoner Outreach Program.

5. The Grand Jury observed the Youth Diversion/Prisoner Outreach Program which is designed for at-risk teens. This one-day program consists of a tour through the prison led by inmates, which provides the youth a firsthand view of prison life. They wear uniforms and are treated like prisoners for a day. Primary participants are at-risk Vacaville youth facilitated through the Vacaville Police Department. However, other agencies from as far away as San Jose are taking advantage of this program.

6. The California Medical Facility provides a centrally located medical and psychiatric institution for the health care needs of the male felon population in California's prisons. This facility was designed to house 2,315 inmates of security levels I (minimum), II (medium A) and III (medium B), but has been reconfigured to house 3,503 inmates through double bunking and other methods. This has created an overcrowded condition. At the time of inspection the facility currently houses 3,341 inmates. The facility operates a hospice unit, as well as a licensed acute-care program. The facility was clean and well managed.

#### IV. Finding and Recommendation

*Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number*

**Finding #1** – Both the California State Prison Solano and the California Medical Facility are overcrowded. (1, 6)

**Recommendation #1**- The overcrowding be addressed by the affected agencies.

#### V. Comments

The Warden of the California State Prison Solano is to be commended for his “hands-on” style of leadership and excellent management of the facility.

The Youth Diversion/Prisoner Outreach Program is designed to divert at-risk teens from entering into the criminal justice system. The program appears to be an effective deterrent from crime for these teens and is administered by a dedicated team of inmates and law enforcement personnel. The Grand Jury applauds this program.

#### Affected Agencies

- California State Prison Solano
- California Medical Facility
- California Department of Corrections