



**SOLANO COUNTY
PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

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Gemma S. Grossi
Chief Probation Officer

To: The Honorable Peter Foor, Presiding Judge Solano County Superior Court

From: Gemma Grossi, Chief Probation Officer, Solano County

Re: Response to the Grand Jury Final Report

Date: August 30, 2004

Fouts Springs Youth Facility

Finding #1: Fouts Springs is not being used to its capacity by the JPA counties (3)(6)

Recommendation #1: JPA counties should look into assigning more wards to Fouts Springs and increase efforts to promote the use of Fouts Springs by other California counties.

Probation Response: Probation disagrees with the finding. The recommendation of the Grand Jury will not be implemented. While the Probation Department agrees that there are beds available for eligible youth at Fouts Springs, the Solano County Probation Department recommends to the Juvenile Court the commitment of appropriate youth to the program in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the Welfare and Institutions Code (W&I Code) and after a thorough screening process. The W&I Code dictates to both the Court and the Probation Officer that youth be maintained in the least restrictive means possible, allowing eligible youth the opportunity to rehabilitate within the community rather than being removed from their homes. Funding has been made available in the recent past allowing counties to develop resources that offer more opportunities for youth to be served without removal from their homes. One impact of the success of these programs is a reduction statewide in the use of residential placements.

The Chief Probation Officer of Solano County continues to work with the Superintendent of Fouts Springs on the promotion of the facility. This includes providing opportunities for discussion of the program at Bay Area Chief Probation Officer meetings as well as the statewide organization.

Solano County Juvenile Hall Inspection

Finding #1: The ongoing construction has created very poor parking and access to the facility. Inclement weather only exacerbates the problem. (8)

Recommendation #1: For future projects, temporary parking and walkways should be planned and placed as close as possible to the entrance.

Probation Department Response: While the Probation Department agrees with the recommendation, the implementation for future projects must be referred to the Department of General Services as that Department manages construction projects for the Probation Department.

Finding #2: Staff dress code seems very lax. It was sometimes difficult to identify staff from wards. (1).

Recommendation #2: Develop some type of dress code. Senior staff stated that the dress code was currently under negotiation.

Probation Department Response: The Probation Department agrees with this finding and the recommendation has been implemented.

Finding #3: Ward complaint form dispensers were empty in several areas. (1)

Recommendation #3: Keep the dispensers supplied with complaint forms.

Probation Department Response: The Probation Department agrees with this finding and the recommendation has been implemented.

Finding #4: Supervising staff stated that mental health issues among wards are rapidly increasing. Currently 15-18 wards are on "psychotropic" medication. (2)(3)

Recommendation #4: Provide necessary training for staff and designate an area in the new facility to house such wards.

Probation Department Response: The Probation Department disagrees with part of the recommendation. The Probation Department agrees that staff working within the Juvenile Hall benefit from training on the issues of dealing with youth with mental health problems. This recommendation has been implemented through the CORE training staff receive, on going in service training as well as the availability of training regarding youngsters with special needs offered through the array of trainings available annually. The Probation Department disagrees with the recommendation that an area be designated within the new facility to house youth who are prescribed psychotropic medications. That part of the recommendation will not be implemented. One of the primary reasons that youth are prescribed these medications is to allow them to coexist with others and to be able to be socialized with their peers. The new facility has on each unit individual rooms if it is felt that a youngster, due to a variety of issues may benefit from a private room. Mental Health services will continue to be available to the youth detained.