



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
ALCOHOL, DRUG AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
300 N. San Antonio Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-5220 · FAX (805) 681-5262
www.admhs.org

For more information:

Suzanne Grimmesey, MFT
Chief Strategy Officer
Desk: 805.681.5289
Cell: 805.886.5403

ADMHS Statement on the Isla Vista Tragedy

June 2, 2014

For Immediate Release:

On behalf of the several hundred staff members of the Santa Barbara County Department of Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS), in this time of sorrow, our hearts are with the families and friends of those impacted by the tragedy in Isla Vista. Events like this highlight the importance of access to care, early identification, intervention and treatment for those experiencing symptoms associated with mental illness.

While recent high profile mass shootings appear to have a mental health component, it is important to recognize that people with mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence, not perpetrators of violence. We hope that the tragedy in Isla Vista does not increase the stigma of those with a mental health diagnosis, as this would only discourage people from getting the care they need. This is particularly critical, because in a given year, approximately one in four American adults experience mental illness.

For those who do need mental health and substance abuse services, over the past year, ADMHS has been working on a new approach to strengthen the Santa Barbara County system of response, care and recovery. Within overall improvements that the department has been working on, included is greater collaboration with law enforcement. An anticipated increase in state mental health funding may well be invested in co-response units. Over \$11 million in grant funding was recently secured to establish new countywide crisis response and triage 24/7 field teams, a crisis stabilization unit in partnership with Cottage Hospital and a crisis respite house. Outpatient programs are being restructured so they are more accessible and better able to address the needs of complex and dually diagnosed individuals.

In addition, we are working with Marian Medical Center to develop additional inpatient psychiatric beds. A number of other enhanced services have been proposed to improve our work with the mentally ill homeless individuals and for people with mental illness involved with the criminal justice system. For a complete listing of all ADMHS services, please visit www.countyofsb.org/admhs/

Specific to the Isla Vista incident, Federal and State privacy laws prevent the Department from discussing specific received by the crisis hotline. However, the following provides a general overview of the Access Line service:

- An ACCESS Line is available to the community 24/7/365 to link callers, or those calling with concern for another, with specialty mental health service needs at the appropriate level of care as determined by telephone screenings.
- ACCESS call screenings are conducted by trained qualified mental health professionals.
- Routine calls are transferred to an outpatient clinic during working hours to link the caller to services ranging from information only to brief therapy or ongoing care.
- If there is a concern about the immediate safety of an individual, law enforcement is contacted to conduct a wellness check to ensure the safety of that person. If law enforcement determines a need for an onsite psychiatric evaluation, the ADMHS CARES mobile crisis team is available 24/7 to conduct 5150 psychiatric evaluations in the field.

In response to the tragic event in Isla Vista, approximately 50 mental health professionals from throughout the county are working together to provide counseling and support to community members impacted by the event. Leaders in Santa Barbara County will continue to work collaboratively to build and sustain the community partnerships necessary to provide the early intervention and prevention services that are proven to be humane and cost-effective in addressing mental health challenges. ADMHS will continue to improve the accessibility and quality of mental health and substance abuse programs and services within the county.

How to Obtain Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services

ADMHS provides treatment, rehabilitation and support service to approximately 7,600 clients with mental illness and 4,500 clients with substance use disorders annually. Individuals needing assistance may call an Access Line, 888-868-1649, which is available to the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The content of telephone calls to the Access Line are confidential in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code 5328 and California Civil Code 50.1.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Grimesey, MFT, ADMHS Chief Strategy Officer, desk: 805.681.5289; cell: 805.886.5403.

###