

County of Santa Barbara Messages

Re: Isla Vista Mass Murder Investigative Summary

February 20, 2015

Key Messages – County CEO/Supervisors

- While it's painful for the horror and tragedy of the murders in Isla Vista to be revisited, it's important that this investigative report be made public to enable all of us to learn what took place and to continually review our procedures and policies.
- We extend our enduring condolences to the family members of those lost on that sad day.
- It's up to all of us to try to help those we know who suffer from mental illness: to encourage them to get help, to be active participants in treatment programs that truly can make a difference and help avoid these types of tragedies.
- We thank all of the first responders and everyone who assisted in the response to this incident.

Key Messages -- Mental Health

- Santa Barbara County has worked hard to use State funding (SB82) to create and enhance programs such as crisis triage teams to provide immediate help for those suffering from mental illness.
- Programs offered by County Mental Health are extensive and robust. However, the best programs offered publicly or via private health care rely on an individual who suffers from mental illness to be an active participant in their treatment.
- If you believe your child or loved one shows indications of behavioral health issues – depression, addiction, anxiety, socialization skills – please call the Santa Barbara County ACCESS help line at 1-888-868-1649. The ACCESS line is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

Questions and Answers

- 1. Should the report have been issued on the day of the Chinese New Year considering some of the victims were of Chinese descent? The families apparently requested a one-day delay in the report's release?**
 - a. While the Sheriff can respond to that specific issue, we do believe it's imperative for the report to be available to the public to ensure we are aware of what transpired.

- 2. The Sheriff's report states that early intervention in cases of mental illness is needed, as well as community-based treatment and providing more mental health facilities/programs as alternatives to jails. What is the County doing on these fronts? [p.1 of Intro]**
 - a. SB82: crisis stabilization unit , residential respite, and mobile crisis and triage teams to identify those with early indications of mental illness or who are in crisis to more proactively address issues before they become critical and law enforcement becomes involved. Crisis stabilization unit and respite residential programs in Santa Barbara expected to open in June of 2015. Funding allocation approved for development of a crisis stabilization unit in Santa Maria. Current exploration of site for use is underway. Mobile triage teams are nearly fully staffed and in operation countywide. Mobile crisis team in Lompoc is nearly fully staffed and is currently operational.
 - b. We've formed a focused team working on the need for collaboration between law enforcement and mental health professionals to help provide integrated services. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) will continue with law enforcement teams countywide. Collaborative field response between law enforcement and mental health triage teams occurring.
 - c. Recent grant funding awarded through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide community outreach and education on First Episode Psychosis as well as train college campus and develop college campus peer teams – Allan Hancock, SBCC and UCSB participating in this effort.
 - d. Outpatient forensic teams are being developed to allow for the coordination with the courts on the identification and treatment for individuals with mental health needs. In addition, these teams are able to provide competency restoration, when clinically possible, on an outpatient basis and in the least restrictive of settings, avoiding inpatient admissions whenever possible.

- 3. The Sheriff states that a thorough review of the investigative report by mental health professionals will assist in the development of new and improved intervention techniques and practices related to cause, identification and treatment of those who suffer from mental illness. What's your response? [p.1 of Intro]**
 - a. While it's hard to know what would have helped the individual responsible, we do know that there is a national lack of funding available for facilities and services.
 - b. We also know that 18 percent of Californians are experiencing some form of mental illness and 9 percent have a substance abuse problem.

- c. Locally, Santa Barbara County is working very hard to improve our system of care for the most vulnerable and seriously mentally ill in our region.
- 4. Are the County's mental health programs enough to help prevent another IV mass murder?**
- a. The County's programs are designed to support those with no other option for assistance. Programs offered publicly or via private health care rely on an individual who suffers from mental illness or addiction to be an active participant in their own treatment.
- 5. Are those who are mentally ill stigmatized by the report or these types of incidents?**
- a. If you believe your child or loved one shows indications of behavioral health issues – depression, addiction, anxiety, socialization skills – please call the Santa Barbara County ACCESS help line at 1-888-868-1649. The ACCESS line is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
- 6. In April 2014, the suspect's mother initiated a welfare check through the suspect's life coach, who in turn contacted Santa Barbara County mental health [p. 4]. The request was made due to disturbing videos that the suspect had posted on YouTube. What exactly was the role of County Mental Health during the phone call/what was said? While deputies visited the suspect, could Mental Health have made a difference at this time?**
- a. We've formed a focused team working on the need for collaboration between law enforcement and mental professionals to help provide integrated services. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) will continue with law enforcement teams countywide. Collaborative field response between law enforcement and mental health triage teams occurring.
- 7. Would Laura's Law have made a difference in this situation? Should Santa Barbara County implement that law?**
- a. Santa Barbara County is currently analyzing the merits of adopting Laura's Law.
 - b. It provides for assisted out-patient treatment yet focuses on voluntary engagement.
 - c. It's important to know that Laura's Law does not force medication on those unwilling to take it.

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