



Contra Costa County

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NEWS RELEASE
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Board of Supervisors Approves a Consent Decree for Enhanced Health and Mental Health Inmate Services

(Martinez, CA) – At a Board meeting on September 29, 2020, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors approved a Consent Decree Settlement Agreement with the Prison Law Office. The Consent Decree is a road map that describes how the County will continue to provide inmate services, including health and mental health services for individuals in County detention facilities.

Since early 2016, the County and the Prison Law Office (PLO) have been working together to evaluate and redesign services provided at the Martinez Detention Facility and the West County Detention Facility. As part of this work, the County's classification system, its mental health and medical services, and its suicide prevention practices were evaluated by independent experts.

"This is a road map for positive change, one that moves the County forward in further improving both the physical space and services provided," said Board Chair, Supervisor Candace Andersen. "For the Board, improving health and mental health services for the individuals at County detention facilities is of the utmost importance. We want to stop those with a mental illness from repeatedly cycling through our jails. If we can provide them with much needed treatment while incarcerated and ensure that they have supportive services upon re-entry to the community, their lives will be substantially improved."

Over the past four years, County staff has been working with the PLO on refining the details of the Consent Decree and remedial plans, during which time the County has also begun implementing many of the improvements described in those documents. To date 83 additional full-time positions have been added to provide these programs and services.

The settlement requires the County to provide enough funds to meet staffing requirements and comply with the remedial plans for mental health/suicide prevention and medical services. Additional information is available in [Board Meeting agenda item D.2.](#)

The Consent Decree will be filed in federal court and will be monitored by court experts and the Prison Law Office. The individuals benefitted by the Consent Decree are all individuals who are now, or in the future will be, detained in a Contra Costa County jail, including individuals who have a qualified disability under Federal law.

A copy of the [proposed settlement agreement](#) is currently available.

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