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Summary of Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at the San Mateo County's Women's Correctional Facility

Unprepared for Flu Outbreak

Issue

Have Correctional Health Services and the Sheriff's Department developed a coordinated plan providing for ongoing services at the Women's Correctional Facility should an avian flu pandemic arise in the County?

Summary

The potential for a widespread outbreak of avian influenza (strain H5N1) among the general population in the near future is a subject of global concern. News reports indicate that at least 140 people worldwide have been killed since this virus began ravaging Asian poultry stocks in late 2003. An estimated 1.9 million Americans could die and almost 10 million could be hospitalized during a pandemic that may take a year or more to evolve. Although the timing, nature and severity of the next pandemic cannot be predicted with certainty, preparedness planning is imperative to lessen the impact. Measures to prevent and control the spread of this disease may include quarantine and isolation where feasible, limiting public gatherings and closing schools and businesses. "Social distancing" strategies (i.e., the act of separating oneself from others as much as possible) will be encouraged as a containment strategy. Many of these measures are not feasible with a jailed population.

Lack of capacity with concomitant overcrowding is one of the Women's Correctional Facility's (Women's Facility) most serious deficiencies. The Women's Facility (described in the San Mateo Jails portion of prior San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Reports) has open-bay style dormitory living conditions and centralized toilet and shower facilities that prevent isolating inmates and limiting physical interactions between them and the staff or visitors. The problems are made worse by the chronic overcrowding, the staff shortages within the Sheriff's Department and the limited number of Correctional

Health nurses. Although staffing seems to operate satisfactorily during normal times, the Women's Facility is not designed or staffed to deal with a pandemic flu outbreak.

The San Mateo County Grand Jury recommends that the San Mateo Board of Supervisors: (1) give priority to adequate staffing of the Women's Facility; (2) continue to develop a plan with deadlines for dealing with a pandemic flu disaster in this facility; and (3) direct that the needs assessment report for the new Women's Facility address space planning and logistics for any contagious disease outbreak.



Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at the San Mateo County's Women's Correctional Facility

Unprepared for Flu Outbreak

Issue

Have Correctional Health Services and the Sheriff's Department developed a coordinated plan providing for ongoing services at the Women's Correctional Facility should an avian flu pandemic arise in the County?

Background

The potential for a widespread outbreak of avian influenza (strain H5N1) among the general population in the near future is a subject of global concern. To date, at least 140 people worldwide have died of this virus since it began ravaging Asian poultry stocks in late 2003.¹ An influenza pandemic could cause more death and illness than any other public health threat. If a pandemic influenza virus with similar virulence to the 1918 "Spanish Flu" strain (20 million deaths worldwide) emerged today, in the absence of intervention, it is estimated that 1.9 million Americans could die and almost 10 million could be hospitalized as the pandemic evolves over a period of a year or more. Although the timing, nature and severity of the next pandemic cannot be predicted with any certainty, preparedness planning is imperative to lessen the impact.²

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed estimates of the impact that pandemic influenza can have on a population. The following table uses those estimates to quantify the impacts that pandemic influenza may have on the populations of California and San Mateo County.³ Note that the hospitalization rate and mortality rate

¹ The Wall Street Journal, August 21, 2006

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Pandemic Influenza Plan, Executive Summary, November 2005, pp 4-11.

³ The San Mateo County Health Department's "Pandemic Flu Preparedness and Response Plan: Phase 1" that can be found at: http://www.smhealth.org.smc/department/printable/0,,1954_109395.

in the table below refer to the percentages of those infected and of those hospitalized, respectively.

CDC Estimates of Percent of Population Affected by the Next Pandemic (Avian Flu Rates)	Rate	California	San Mateo County
Population		33,000,000	750,000
Influenza Infection Rate	35%	11,550,000	262,500
Patients Requiring Hospitalization	3.8%	440,000	10,000
Mortality Rate	50%	220,000	5,000

Influenza is a highly contagious viral disease that is usually transmitted by coughing, sneezing, or by touching people or objects. Measures to prevent and control the spread of this disease may include quarantine and isolation where feasible, limiting public gatherings and the closing of schools and businesses. “Social distancing” strategies (i.e., the act of separating oneself from others as much as possible) will be encouraged as a containment strategy.

The usual measures for containing the spread of influenza would be difficult in a jail under the best of circumstances, and the San Mateo County Women’s Correctional Facility (Women’s Facility) is certainly not the best of circumstances. It has a number of deficiencies; the most serious is the lack of capacity that produces serious overcrowding. The San Mateo Jails portion of the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Reports⁴ describe the open-bay style dormitory living conditions wherein upwards of 40 inmates may be housed in one room at the Women’s Facility.

Investigation

Members of the Grand Jury toured the Women’s Facility, interviewed staff members of the Sheriff’s Department and the County Health Department, including staff of Correctional Health Services, and reviewed selected documents, some of which are cited in the footnotes to this report.

Findings

The Women’s Facility is overcrowded. The facility is currently configured for 158 beds in a building with capacity for 84 beds, according to the State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Most toilet and shower facilities are centralized and for group use. There are no isolation facilities at the Women’s Facility; if needed, female inmates are transported to the Maguire Facility, which has only a limited number of isolation rooms.

⁴ The 2004-2005 Grand Jury report on San Mateo County Jails: available at http://www.sanmateocourt.org/grandjury/2004/reports/Jailsvisit_31_final.pdf and the 2005-2006 Grand Jury report available at: <http://www.sanmateocourt.org/grandjury/2005/reports/JailsF.pdf>.

A consulting firm, DMJM H&N⁵, has been retained to conduct a needs assessment for a new Women's Facility.

Historically, the initial health screening, TB testing and staff vigilance has limited the spread of communicable diseases at the Women's Facility. Correctional Health Services has begun to stockpile appropriate protective masks and anti-viral medication to be used by staff and inmates should they have to combat an avian flu outbreak.

Annually, 16,000 to 18,000 inmates are booked through the County's correctional system. The medical needs of this population are served by 60 employees of Correctional Health, 30 of whom are nurses rotating through assignments. A nurse from Correctional Health Services is on-site about 12 hours per day at the Women's Facility (as compared to the Maguire Correctional Facility with 24-hour nursing care). After-hours emergency medical care for a female inmate is provided at a hospital or the Maguire Facility.

Staffing shortages exist in both the Sheriff's Department and Correctional Health Services. Of the approximately 200 employees in the Sheriff's Department, 25% may be unavailable at any given time due to vacancies, illness, vacations, training, etc. Permanent staffing by the Sheriff's Department at the Women's Facility is below the authorized level of four officers per shift. Vacancies are filled temporarily by overtime work. Nurses in Correctional Health Services must pass a background check and work well in a detention environment. Attraction and retention of qualified nursing personnel is difficult. Although "hard numbers" are not available, correctional officers and medical staff will not be immune if the flu spreads through the County. Staff shortages will be exacerbated.

Conclusions

Many people come in contact with the inmates in the Women's Facility (new inmates, Sheriff and probation staff, visitors, attorneys, agency volunteers and counselors), so this "confined" population is unlikely to escape exposure to a pandemic flu outbreak. The sheer number of inmates cycling through this facility almost guarantees exposure. Furthermore, chronic overcrowding, open-bay style dormitories and the centralized toilet and shower facilities of the Women's Facility prevent isolation, or even the limitation of physical contact among inmates, staff and visitors. This facility is woefully inadequate to deal with a pandemic flu outbreak. All these problems are made worse by the staff shortage in the Sheriff's Department and the limited number of Correctional Health nurses. While the staffing seems to operate satisfactorily during normal times, the Women's Facility could not deal with a pandemic flu outbreak.

⁵ DMJM H&N - San Francisco, 405 Howard Street (Suite 400), San Francisco, CA 94105.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Department:

- 1.1 Give priority to staffing the Women's Correctional Facility at the authorized level so that it can more effectively deal with critical situations.
- 1.2 Continue its planning sessions with the Health Department, employees of other state and county correctional facilities and the courts to establish a detailed plan for dealing with a pandemic flu outbreak.

The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

- 2.1 Ensure that the needs assessment report for the new Women's Facility to be prepared by the consulting firm, DMJM H&N, adequately addresses the logistics and space planning needed to combat a contagious disease outbreak.
- 2.2 Support and participate in the planning sessions among the Sheriff's Department, Health Department and the Court; establish timelines with realistic deadlines for formalizing a detailed plan for dealing with a pandemic flu outbreak.
- 2.3 Revisit the 2006-2007 preliminary budget allocation for the Sheriff's Department and Correctional Health Services to consider (a) whether it can support the hiring of additional nurses to reduce the need to transport inmates to the Maguire Facility/hospital or (b) whether the salaries of additional personnel can be offset by a savings in transportation costs and overtime expenses.



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence

County Manager's Office

DATE: December 22, 2006
BOARD MEETING DATE: January 9, 2007
SPECIAL NOTICE: None
VOTE REQUIRED: None

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: John L. Maltbie, County Manager
SUBJECT: 2006-07 Grand Jury Response

Recommendation

Accept this report containing the County's responses to the following 2006-07 Grand Jury reports: Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at the San Mateo County Women's Correctional Facility and Badge Control at the San Mateo County Hall of Justice.

VISION ALIGNMENT:

Commitment: Responsive, effective and collaborative government.

Goal 20: Government decisions are based on careful consideration of future impact, rather than temporary relief or immediate gain.

This activity contributes to the goal by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

Discussion

The County is mandated to respond to the Grand Jury within 90 days from the date that reports are filed with the County Clerk and Elected Officials are mandated to respond within 60 days. It is also the County's policy to provide periodic updates to the Board and the Grand Jury on the progress of past Grand Jury recommendations requiring ongoing or further action. To that end, attached is the County's response to the Grand Jury reports on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at the San Mateo County Women's Correctional Facility and Badge Control at the San Mateo County Hall of Justice issued October 12, 2006.

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at the San Mateo County Women's Correctional Facility

Findings:

Staff is in general agreement with the Grand Jury's findings.

Recommendations:

The Board of Supervisors should:

2.1 Ensure that the needs assessment report for the new Women's Facility to be prepared by the consulting firm, DMJM H&N, adequately addresses the logistics and space planning needed to combat a contagious disease outbreak.

Response: Concur. The needs assessment for the new Women's Correctional Facility will include consideration of pandemic flu preparedness requirements.

2.2 Support and participate in the planning sessions among the Sheriff's Department, Health Department and the Court; establish timelines with realistic deadlines for formalizing a detailed plan for dealing with a pandemic flu outbreak.

Response: Concur. The Sheriff's Office, Health Department, and the Court have held a series of meetings to prepare a planned Pandemic Flu response, including a potential outbreak occurring in one of the Sheriff's secure facilities. A draft plan has been prepared. The team is currently developing a final plan that is due to be completed in March 2007. A Pandemic Flu exercise is being planned for May 2007, so that the plans of the County and other community partners can be rehearsed and assessed to identify any gaps in coverage.

2.3 Revisit the 2006-07 preliminary budget allocation for the Sheriff's Department and Correctional Health Services to consider (a) whether it can support the hiring of additional nurses to reduce the need to transport inmates to the Maguire Facility/hospital or (b) whether the salaries of additional personnel can be offset by savings in transportation costs and overtime expenses.

Response: Concur. Nurse staffing levels at the Women's Correctional Facility will be reviewed as part of the FY 2007-08 budget development for the Sheriff's Office and Correctional Services Division of the Health Department.

Badge Control at the San Mateo County Hall of Justice

Findings:

Staff is in general agreement with the Grand Jury's findings, however, there are some minor clarifications that should be noted, as follows:

- In the first sentence of the Background, it reads, **“Upon entering the Hall of Justice, the general public and their belongings are processed through a metal detector and then further scrutinized by security.”** It should be noted that any carry-in items such as handbags, brief cases, boxes, etc. are screened through an x-ray machine.
- The first sentence of the Investigation reads, **“The Grand Jury interviewed representatives of the BSWG (Building Security Work Group) and was provided a copy of the County Administrative Memorandum B-20, Building Security Policy and Court Security Plan, which has not yet been approved by the County or the Court.”** Administrative Memorandum B-20 was formally adopted on August 12, 1998; however, it is currently out of date and needs to be updated.
- The second sentence of the Findings, under sub-header Attorneys reads, **“Attorneys from other counties appearing before the courts in the Hall of Justice may also obtain badges, which may have active status for years even if they are not used.”** Only attorneys in good standing with the San Mateo County Bar Association for a period of at least two years may be issued badges. It is true that on one occasion visiting attorneys for a high-profile case were issued cardkeys, but those cardkeys were terminated immediately following completion of the trial.

Recommendations:

The Board of Supervisors should:

1. Adopt procedures to insure that occasional and unannounced spot checks are conducted at all badge controlled access points to verify that each badge belongs to the user of that badge.

Response: Concur. The Sheriff's Countywide Security Unit will be tasked with the responsibility of conducting spot checks by the un-intrusive use of cardkey computer monitors. The results of these spot checks will be documented and forwarded to the Captain of Courts, Custody and Security Services and will be shared with the BSWG in order to identify and address security concerns in the future.

2. Adopt procedures to insure that the badge of every terminated employee is returned to the County and deactivated immediately upon termination.

Response: Concur. If an employee is terminated for cause, ISD or the San Mateo Medical Center (depending on the employee's assignment) will deactivate the employee's cardkey and notify the Sheriff's Countywide Security Unit. Routine resignations are handled through a termination report, which is generated after each payroll. The report is sent to the County's Cardkey Administrator at ISD. The cardkeys are deactivated for all employees on the termination report. The Medical Center's Cardkey Administrator is notified by e-mail from the various Unit Managers that an employee has terminated and immediately deactivates that employee's cardkey. The result is that the cardkeys, cancelled electronically, will no longer activate the door mechanisms. These processes have been in place for some time but need to be formally adopted in County Administrative Memorandum B-20.

The issue of the employees returning their cardkeys is a more complicated issue, as some employees feel that the cardkey is their personal property and fail to return them upon termination. The Sheriff's Office will work with the BSWG to develop a countywide procedure that will ensure that every effort is made to retrieve employee cardkeys upon termination from County service.

3. Re-examine the policies of issuing badges that are valid for more than twelve months and of allowing unused badges to remain valid.

Response: Disagree. Setting annual termination dates for County employees and members of the Bar Association would create an undue burden on cardkey administration and could have significant impacts on building operations. This past year the County initiated a process whereby departments are required to review a report of all their employees that have cardkey access to the Hall of Justice and verify that the employees are still employed by the County and that their level of access is appropriate. The County's Health Department has already completed such a review and a review by the Human Services Agency is currently underway. The plan is that all departments would perform a comprehensive review at least once a year. Though in place, this process still needs to be formally adopted in County Administrative Memorandum B-20. The BSWG will also approach the Bar Association about conducting a review of all member attorneys who possess active cardkeys.

4. Re-examine the policy of allowing work crews access to the Hall of Justice without vetting each member of the crew.

Response: Disagree. It would cause significant workload to do backgrounds on all contract workers. Also, the policy would effectively eliminate the County's use of contractors that provide rehabilitation services, such as Delancey Street Movers. It should be noted that Public Works and/or County department staff are required to have at least one employee on hand when vendors/contractors are accessing any County building after hours to ensure that workers remain in the authorized areas.

5. Formalize and adopt County Administrative Memorandum B-20, *Building Security and Court Security Plan*.

Response: Concur. Although County Administrative Memorandum B-20 was formally adopted in 1998, it needs to be updated. An interdepartmental work group will be established in early 2007 to begin a comprehensive review and update of all County Administrative Memoranda. Administrative Memorandum B-20 will be a high priority item. The County will notify the Grand Jury once B-20 has been updated and adopted.



ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SHERIFF

December 4, 2006

Honorable John L. Grandsaert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report: Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at the San Mateo County's Women's Correctional Facility

Dear Judge Grandsaert:

Summary:

The potential for a widespread outbreak of avian influenza (strain H5N1) among the general population in the near future is a subject of global concern. News reports indicate that at least 140 people worldwide have been killed since this virus began ravaging Asian poultry stocks in late 2003. An estimated 1.9 million Americans could die and almost 10 million could be hospitalized during a pandemic that may take a year or more to evolve. Although the timing, nature and severity of the next pandemic cannot be predicted with certainty, preparedness planning is imperative to lessen the impact. Measures to prevent and control the spread of this disease may include quarantine and isolation where feasible, limiting public gatherings and closing schools and businesses. "Social distancing" strategies (i.e., the act of separating oneself from others as much as possible) will be encouraged as a containment strategy. Many of these measures are not feasible with a jailed population.

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The San Mateo County Grand Jury recommends that the San Mateo Board of Supervisors: (1) give priority to adequate staffing of the Women's Facility; (2) continue to develop a plan with deadlines for dealing with a pandemic flu disaster in this facility; and (3) direct that the needs assessment report for the new Women's Facility address space planning and logistics for any contagious disease outbreak.

Findings

The Women's Facility is overcrowded. The facility is currently configured for 158 beds in a building with capacity for 84 beds, according to the State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Most toilet and shower facilities are centralized and for group use. There are no isolation facilities at the Women's Facility; if needed, female inmates are transported to the Maguire Facility, which has only a limited number of isolation rooms.

Conclusions

Many people come in contact with the inmates in the Women's Facility (new inmates, Sheriff and probation staff, visitors, attorneys, agency volunteers and counselors), so this "confined" population is unlikely to escape exposure to a pandemic flu outbreak. The sheer number of inmates cycling through this facility almost guarantees exposure. Furthermore, chronic overcrowding, open-bay style dormitories and the centralized toilet and shower facilities of the Women's Facility prevent isolation, or even the limitation of physical contact among inmates, staff and visitors. This facility is woefully inadequate to deal with a pandemic flu outbreak. All these problems are made worse by the staff shortage in the Sheriff's Department and the limited number of Correctional Health nurses. While the staffing seems to operate satisfactorily during normal times, the Women's Facility could not deal with a pandemic flu outbreak

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Department:

- 1.1 Give priority to staffing the Women's Correctional Facility at the authorized level so that it can more effectively deal with critical situations.

Response:

Concur. The administrative staff of the Maguire Correctional Facility and the Women's Correctional Center has developed a staffing plan that provides immediate relief to the Women's Correctional Center; this however is only a short term solution. The County has provided us with four additional positions to provide a full shift complement at the Women's Correctional Center, this only underscores the greater issue staffing throughout the Sheriff's Office.

In recent months the Sheriff's Office has conducted a staffing study and found that as an organization we are severely understaffed. We believe that this is a result of many years of budget cuts, restricting our ability to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is important to understand that once positions are approved it takes a period of eighteen months to recruit, hire and train an employee before they are able to stand alone in an assignment. We are actively engaged in the process of recruitment, as well as temporarily filling positions with the assistance of staff from other divisions within the Sheriff's Office.

We are currently meeting with the County Manager's Office on an ongoing basis to resolve this issue and to work on the establishment of a relief staff pool. This will allow us to provide staff support in those areas where assistance is needed during our regular course of business.

- 1.2 Continue its planning sessions with the Health Department, employees of other state and county correctional facilities and the courts to establish a detailed plan for dealing with a pandemic flu outbreak.

Response:

Partially agrees with recommendation. It is essential to continue planning sessions with the Health Department and other county departments and courts regarding a pandemic flu. It is unlikely that state and other county correctional facilities will be in a position to assist this county. Any plan that is developed has to be able to stand alone.

The Sheriff's Office, has been developing internal plans for responding to a pandemic flu over the last six months. This planning task is now been expanded to interface with other county departments. This will ensure the operational continuity of the criminal justice system as well as the continuance of county government service.

Pandemic flu concerns will also be a consideration in further discussions as we move forward in the planning process for new correctional facilities, currently with DMJM H&N.

The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

- 2.1 Ensure that the needs assessment report for the new Women's Facility to be prepared by the consulting firm, DMJM H&N, adequately addresses the logistics and space planning needed to combat a contagious disease outbreak.
- 2.2 Support and participate in the planning sessions among the Sheriff's Department, Health Department and the Court; establish timelines with realistic deadlines for formalizing a detailed plan for dealing with a pandemic flu outbreak.
- 2.3 Revisit the 2006-2007 preliminary budget allocation for the Sheriff's Department and Correctional Health Services to consider (a) whether it can support the hiring of additional nurses to reduce the need to transport inmates to the Maguire Facility/hospital or (b) whether the salaries of additional personnel can be offset by a savings in transportation costs and overtime expenses.

Sincerely,

Don Horsley, Sheriff

cc: The Honorable Board of Supervisors
Grand Jury website