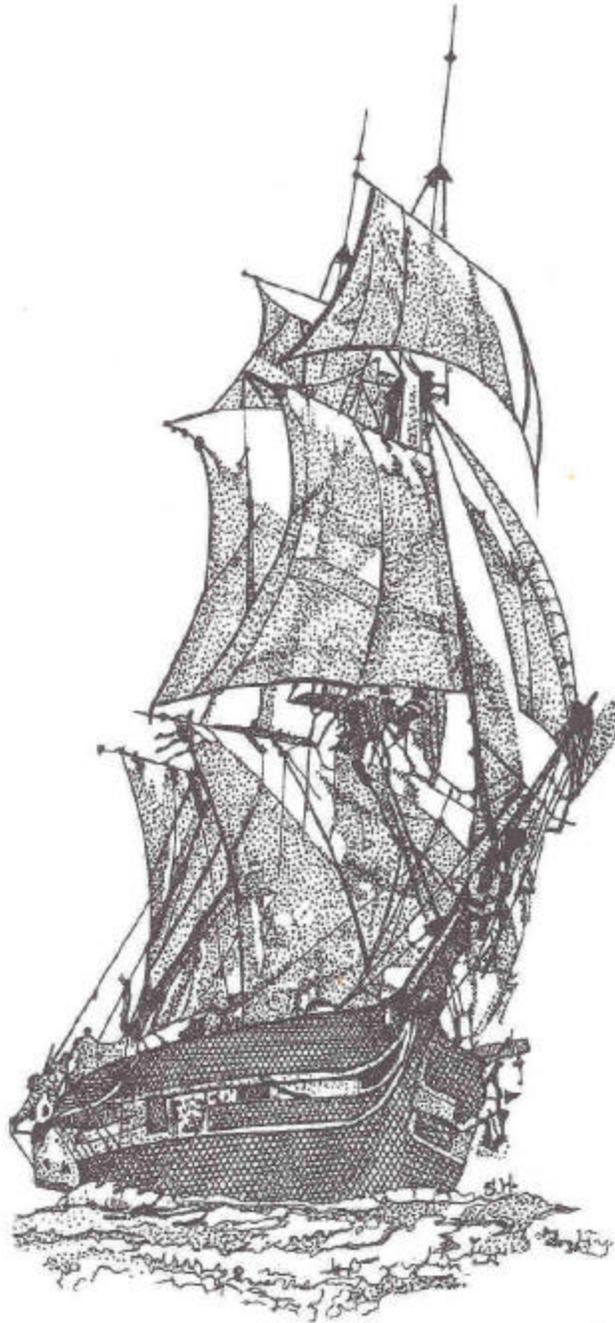


**ORANGE
COUNTY
GRAND
JURY**



The Pilgrim at Dana Point Harbor

**FINAL
REPORT
2002-2003**

**Medical Resources At
Juvenile Facilities
MAY 5, 2003**

MEDICAL RESOURCES AT JUVENILE FACILITIES

Summary

The 2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury reviewed the use of medical resources at juvenile detention facilities. Three outlying facilities, Youth Guidance Center, Joplin Youth Center, and Los Piños Conservation Camp are without full time medical coverage. These facilities have been relying on transportation to and from Juvenile Hall of up to 104 miles for many emergency and routine medical needs.

Reduced reliance on transportation results in better use of the Deputy Probation Counselors' time, more school time for the juveniles, and considerable monetary savings and cost avoidance. The addition of a physician visit once a week at the remote facilities would strengthen these positive impacts. Transportation of minors for routine medical and dental appointments place a demand on probation staff, increase transportation cost and result in loss of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funds. Reduction of these activities could result in cost savings of approximately \$150,000 a year.

Introduction and Purpose

The 2001-2002 Orange County Grand Jury reported that Joplin Youth Center did not have a nurse on duty on weekends and recommended that medical personnel be hired for this coverage. While the Probation Department endorsed this recommendation, the Health Care Agency (HCA) responded with detailed reasons why not to implement it.

Due to the opposing positions taken by these two County agencies, the 2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury decided to review the medical coverage at all Orange County juvenile detention facilities.

Method of Study

- Visited Juvenile Hall, Youth Guidance Center (YGC), Joplin Youth Center (Joplin), and Los Piños Conservation Camp (Los Piños).
- Interviewed Probation Department staff, HCA staff, and facility nurses.
- Reviewed HCA reports on medical emergency responses from September 2001 through August 2002.
- Reviewed Probation Department's transportation records.

Background

Youth Guidance Center, Joplin Youth Center, Los Piños Conservation Camp and Juvenile Hall are the four major County juvenile detention facilities. All juveniles enter the probation detention system at Juvenile Hall which is centrally located at the Lamoreaux Justice Center in Orange. HCA provides around the clock medical care there. After being classified and screened medically, juveniles may be sent to specialized programs at the three other locations. Youth Guidance Center is located close by in Santa Ana and has a nurse on duty from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. At all other times, it can easily use the medical facilities at Juvenile Hall.

Los Piños and Joplin are located in the remote, rural parts of the County. They also have nurses on staff from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Both routine and emergency medical visits from these facilities involve long round trips to Juvenile Hall where professional medical help is available. Table A shows the number of juveniles at each juvenile facility and its relative distance to Juvenile Hall.

Table A

Facility	Location	No. of Juveniles	Round Trip to Juvenile Hall	Travel+ Wait Time
Juvenile Hall	Orange	434	0	0
Youth Guidance Center	Santa Ana	125	4 miles	3 hrs
Joplin Youth Center	Trabuco Canyon	64	44 miles	6 hrs
Los Piños Conservation Camp	Cleveland National Forest	125	104 miles	6 hrs

Nurses play an important role at all juvenile facilities. In addition to routine duties, they teach personal hygiene and provide health related counseling. The Grand Jury reviewed HCA reports from September 2001 through August 2002 (the study year) in order to better understand the use of medical resources at the remote juvenile facilities.

Emergency visits to Juvenile Hall from the outlying facilities escalate when the nurses are not on duty. At these times Deputy Probation Counselors (DPCs) consult by phone with the medical staff at Juvenile Hall. Although the DPCs have been trained in First Aid and CPR, they do not feel qualified to explain the medical conditions to the medical staff at Juvenile Hall. They lean heavily on the side of caution when uncertainty exists and transport the minors down the hill to Juvenile Hall. Of the 366 reported medical emergencies during the study year, eighty-three percent (305) occurred when a nurse was not on duty. About forty percent (145) occurred on weekends.

Routine trips also occur in significant numbers. Records obtained from the Probation Department show that approximately 1,275 routine medical trips and 925 dental visits were recorded for the study year.

The 1,275 routine medical trips have significant consequences. The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) receives Average Daily Attendance (ADA) money for each student who attends school at a rate of \$28 per day. The total loss of ADA due to transporting for these routine medical visits was \$35,700. More importantly, the juveniles as a group lost 1,275 days of instruction.

Instead of transporting the juveniles to routine dental visits on a daily basis, Juvenile Hall has recently changed the procedure to two dental runs a week. This change of appointment procedure has reduced transportation and lost staff time by sixty percent.

Routine trips involve other costs as well. A significant amount of the DPCs' time, worth approximately \$84,000 a year, was spent facilitating the routine medical and dental runs. Vehicle related expenses cost the Probation Department approximately \$30,000.

The HCA currently has a contract with a local hospital and medical group to provide health care to juveniles. If this contract were to include a physician visit to each of the outlying facilities once a week, medication reviews, prescriptions, physicals, and routine medical examinations could be handled on site. This practice would eliminate much of the transportation and staff time associated with routine medical runs.

The Grand Jury is encouraged that both the HCA and the Probation Department have already taken steps to provide medical care for juveniles with less reliance on transportation. The DPCs are able to use their time more productively, and the juveniles are able to spend more time in the classrooms. Certainly some dollars are saved. The addition of a physician visit once a week would strengthen these positive impacts.

Findings

Under California Penal Code §933 and §933.05, responses are required to all findings. The 2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury has arrived at the following findings:

1. Forty percent of medical emergencies occurred at remote juvenile facilities on weekends during the study year.
2. DPCs are more inclined to transport a minor to Juvenile Hall in a medical emergency when a nurse was not present.
3. Transporting minors to routine medical appointments increased demand on staff time, added transportation costs, and lost ADA funds. The total cost savings, cost avoidance, and additional ADA money to OCDE could be approximately \$150,000 a year by the addition of a physician visit to remote facilities.

4. HCA currently has a contract with a local hospital and medical group to provide health care to juveniles.
5. Juvenile Hall has changed the dental appointment procedure to reduce the number of routine dental trips from Joplin and Los Piños by sixty percent.

Responses to Findings 1-5 are required from the Board of Supervisors.

Response to Finding 3 is required from the Superintendent of the Orange County Department of Education.

Responses to Findings 1-5 are requested from the Probation Department and the Health Care Agency.

Recommendations

In accordance with California Penal Code §933 and §933.05, each recommendation requires a response from the government entity to which it is addressed. These responses are submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. Based upon the findings, the 2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury makes the following recommendations:

1. Conduct a study to better understand the severity of the medical emergencies occurring during nurses' off-duty hours. (Findings 1-2)
2. Take appropriate action after analyzing the study to mitigate lost time and costs. (Findings 1-2)
3. Examine the medical contract to see if it could include a weekly physician visit to all remote facilities. (Findings 3-4)
4. Continue the twice-weekly dental appointment practice for Joplin and Los Piños. (Finding 5)

Responses to Recommendations 1-4 are required from the Board of Supervisors.

Responses to Recommendations 1-4 are requested from the Probation Department and the Health Care Agency.