



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

312 SOUTH HILL STREET, THIRD FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90013
(213) 974-6100
<http://oig.lacounty.gov>

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
HOLLY J. MITCHELL
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February 21, 2024

TO: Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Max Huntsman
Inspector General

SUBJECT: **REPORT BACK ON SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANTS
IN FURTHERING THE SUSTAINABILITY AND SUCCESS OF THE
FORENSIC IN-PATIENT STEPDOWN UNIT PROGRAM
(ITEM NO. 10, AGENDA OF NOVEMBER 21, 2023).**

Purpose of Memorandum

On November 21, 2023, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) passed a motion aimed at providing support for inmate Mental Health Assistants (MHAs) to further the sustainability and success of the Forensic In-Patient Stepdown Program (FIP-Stepdown) at Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF) and Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF). The motion instructed the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department), Correctional Health Services (CHS), and with input from the MHAs, to provide the Board with a report back on a feasibility and implementation plan for providing support to the MHAs. In providing this report, Office of Inspector General Staff spoke with the MHAs at TTCF and CRDF, collaborated with County Counsel, and met with CHS and Department Staff.

Background

As noted in the Board motion, the FIP-Stepdown program is currently supported by MHAs, who are themselves incarcerated, working with people in custody who have complicated and severe mental health needs. The MHAs are volunteers who provide peer support, education, and motivation to engage in daily activities with the goal of

imparting skills aimed at achieving medication compliance, independence, and self-sufficiency for those persons in our jails with significant mental health challenges.¹ The Board and the United States Department of Justice have recognized the formation and expansion of the FIP-Stepdown program as a commendable action the Sheriff's Department has undertaken to provide therapeutic housing to severely mentally ill people in the Department's custody.² The MHAs are integral to the success of the program, as they provide necessary peer support to patients living within the FIP-Stepdown module.

Presently, the Sheriff's Department uses 13 MHAs incarcerated at TTCF and 10 MHAs incarcerated at CRDF. These MHAs live in FIP-Stepdown pods with patients, where they work to develop the patients' pro-social behavior through teaching life skills, encouraging the patients to take psychiatric medication and engage in programming, and providing meaningful peer support. As volunteers, the MHAs receive limited benefits for providing support in a challenging and physically demanding environment. The Board's motion to provide additional support to the MHAs who, in turn, provide support to people in custody suffering from mental illness, will enhance sustainability in the FIP-Stepdown program.

Additional Support for MHAs. In interviews, both MHAs and Sheriff's Department staff identified as a priority an additional source for support for MHAs not specifically mentioned in the Board's motion: dedicated, full-time custody personnel staffing for FIP-Stepdown, preferably in a dedicated unit.

Dedicated staff for FIP-Stepdown modules. Assigning full-time dedicated staff to ensure continuity between program administration and oversee day-to-day program operation would be instrumental in ensuring that the MHAs receive the support outlined in the Board motion. The Sheriff's Department reports that it has assigned specific staff to both the AM and the PM shift in all FIP-Stepdown modules. However, due to staffing shortages, the Department often rotates deputies through the facility to provide coverage to areas that need additional deputy staff, resulting in deputies staffing the FIP-Stepdown modules who do not have any prior experience with the program. The MHAs report that this inconsistent staffing impacts the functionality of the program.

¹ MHAs created their own training curriculum and use that to inform new MHAs of their approach to assisting the patients who are assigned to the unit.

² See Board Motion, [Supporting the Expansion of FIP Stepdown and HOH Dorm Units the Los Angeles County Jails](#), (June 27, 2003); [Monitor's Fifteenth Report, United States. v. County of Los Angeles](#), No. 15-05903 (C.D. Cal., July 17, 2023).

Rotating deputies often do not understand MHAs' unique role and therefore do not allow the MHAs the autonomy necessary to provide peer support to the patients within the pod, do not provide the MHAs with the benefits they receive as compensation for their role, and, in some instances, even mistake the MHAs for inmate trustees charged with providing janitorial support throughout the facility. Assigning permanent staff would both protect MHAs' role and benefits and also foster rapport between the assigned pod deputy, the assigned pod MHA, and the patients living within the pod. The Sheriff's Department reports that it will conduct briefings with facility staff to ensure that all deputies understand the operation of the FIP-Stepdown program in the event staffing needs require that they work in a FIP-Stepdown module. While these briefings will be helpful, they do not address the problems caused by the lack of continuity in deputy staffing.

Creating a unit for FIP-Stepdown. Assigning a single departmental unit to run and oversee the FIP-Stepdown program for the units at both CRDF and TTCF would provide the infrastructure necessary to ensure consistency of programming at both facilities. With the rapid expansion of the program, many Sheriff's Department staff and MHAs in the newer FIP-Stepdown units require additional training to be effective collaborators. For example, despite conducting two virtual training sessions with the seasoned TTCF MHAs in 2022, MHAs at CRDF have not received any additional or ongoing training from the MHAs at TTCF. The Sheriff's Department indicated that it would facilitate providing virtual training to the MHAs at CRDF but have not yet done so. MHAs at CRDF stress that training and mentorship from the TTCF MHAs is necessary to provide guidance on successfully managing the challenges inherent within their role. In addition to the lack of training, the MHAs at CRDF report that they also struggled to receive training materials, therapeutic living supplies, and incentives necessary for their role. Similarly, Department staff assigned to newer FIP-Stepdown units have requested training from experienced staff at established FIP-Stepdown modules to learn more about the operation and their role within this unique environment.

Unit-level oversight would facilitate peer-training opportunities and create relationships among staff at the expanding programs to ensure that all FIP-Stepdown units practice the same concepts, while also meeting the more individualized needs of patients and MHAs. Because the Sheriff's Department's sworn personnel are subject to promotion and rotation, the Office of Inspector General recommends that the Sheriff's Department assign a civilian employee position to oversee the custody supervision component of the program in order to maintain consistency between programs and to safeguard benefits afforded to the MHAs, who are general population inmates.

CHS Clinical Staff for FIP-Stepdown. Assigning a CHS clinical staff position to the FIP-Stepdown units would provide the MHAs with an on-site and available clinician to provide patient support. The flagship FIP-Stepdown module previously employed a psychiatric technician who provided support and ensured a stable line of communication between CHS providers, MHAs, and the patients. The MHAs have described this individual as essential to the program and indicated that having a psychiatric technician assigned to each FIP-Stepdown module provided effective support and expertise.

CHS reports that, while it has eight open psychiatric technician positions (with one new hire scheduled to start in February 2024), it has encountered challenges recruiting people to fill them due in large part to a national shortage of mental health workers and difficulty finding candidates willing to work in a jail environment. However, CHS reports that, while it will continue to recruit psychiatric technicians to be assigned to FIP-Stepdown modules, it is pivoting to using Mental Health Supervisors for oversight and support of the FIP-Stepdown Program. CHS has not indicated whether using Mental Health Supervisors will present similar staffing issues due to mental health worker shortages or what effects the change may have on the nature and quality of the support for the FIP-Stepdown program.³

Provision 1.a.

Provision 1.a. of the Board motion directs the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with the Department, CHS, and with input from the MHAs, to provide the Board with a feasibility and implementation report back on providing incentives such as wages, food, and time credits for the MHAs.

Wages

The MHAs state that earning wages as compensation for their role would provide the strongest support, allowing them to achieve some financial independence. California Penal Code [section 4019.3](#) provides that a county may provide credit to each prisoner confined in or committed to a county jail with a sum not to exceed two dollars (\$2) for each eight hours of work within the jail. The Sheriff's Department does not currently provide monetary compensation to any inmate workers and reports that it lacks available funding as well as a proper mechanism to provide wages to the MHAs.

³ CHS reports that these positions are filled currently. However, OIG is concerned that given persistent staffing issues there remains the possibility of future staffing shortages.

Food

The Sheriff's Department recognizes that inmate workers require increased caloric and nutritional intake based on the physical demands associated with their work. MHAs similarly report that "[h]ealthy hot meals and snacks are imperative to health, longevity, and efficient performance,"⁴ especially considering that they assist with mental health crises in addition to their daily schedule of caring for and supporting the FIP-Stepdown patients.

The Department's Food Services Unit (FSU) serves three meals daily to people in custody in Los Angeles County jails and provides incentive meals to eligible inmate workers. Presently, MHAs at TTCF and CRDF receive one hot incentive meal for lunch daily and access to snacks, such as cookies, muffins, and chips. FSU reports that it plans to begin serving two hot incentive meals and healthy, high protein snacks to the MHAs by March 1, 2024. Program patients also have access to snacks, which the MHAs distribute.

FSU staff met with MHAs at TTCF and CRDF several times seeking suggestions on types of food incentives and for the MHAs to taste test some potential new products. MHAs requested of FSU an increase in the number of hot incentive meals from one to two per day as well as access to more nutritious snacks, specifically, higher-protein foods and fresh produce. They also requested access to condiments, like hot sauce, sugar, salt, ranch dressing, and BBQ sauce.

FSU reported that, at the program's current size, it can facilitate an increase to two hot incentive meals per day for MHAs at CRDF and TTCF. Readymade 'TV dinner' meals may also be used to supplement or alternate as a hot incentive meal option for lunch or dinner. FSU created three tiers of proposed snack items to pilot that would improve variety and nutrient diversity. Examples of expanded snack options are protein bars, protein shakes, yogurt, tuna/chicken salad with crackers, string cheese, jerky, almonds, pretzels, hummus, and sliced/dried fruit. Two snack items would be supplied to each MHA daily with a rotating menu each week. At least one of the snack options would be primarily protein-based.

One of the most significant hurdles FSU faces with providing food incentives is modifying current food contracts to allow for the procurement of more nutrient-dense,

⁴ This quote was taken from written materials provided by the MHAs at TTCF as part of their collaboration with the Office of Inspector General in response to the Board motion.

less processed foods, with a particular focus on protein-rich foods and fresh produce. FSU currently maintains more than 30 food contracts, which allow the purchase only of specific foods. While FSU can purchase items off-contract, it does so at significantly increased costs. However, FSU reports that the additional costs may be offset by reduced food waste. County procurement policies present additional limitations on food-service providers, but most FSU contracts will expire over the next three years, giving the Department an opportunity to ensure new contracts have options for more healthful and appetizing foods. FSU already revised menus at the start of 2024 to reflect some contractual changes and plans at least two more menu revisions for this fiscal year. While supply chain issues are not as significant as during the pandemic, FSU still experiences the unavailability of or delay in receiving certain products, which could impact incentive availability and rotational options.

Labor shortages have also posed a major challenge to FSU. With fewer staff and kitchen trustees, FSU has had to rely on more pre-packaged and processed foods, due to their ease of service. Staffing and kitchen trustee shortages, if they continue, could impact the ability of FSU to fulfill hot incentive meals and snack requests. This risk is greatest at CRDF, where staffing shortages have already resulted in delays to snack orders and FSU cancelling hot meal incentives for a day or even a week. To avoid these problems, FSU requires funding to modernize its kitchen equipment to allow the Department to prepare hot meals for incentives with fewer staff.

While the focus of this report back as it relates to food is on incentives for the MHAs, the MHAs often share food with program participants, sometimes by combining various snacks into treats (e.g., using bananas, muffins, and milk to make banana milkshakes at CRDF). FSU therefore recommends all MHAs complete the basic ServSafe Food Handler course to help ensure MHAs follow food safety principles in order to minimize foodborne illness within the units. This also provides an educational opportunity as the certification is used in the hospitality industry and is valid for three years. FSU reports that it will provide the ServSafe Food Handler course to the current MHAs this quarter and will provide the ServSafe Food Handler course to future MHAs on a quarterly basis.

FSU has expressed concerns that food incentives may lead to allergic reactions and interfere with special diets. FSU estimates that about one-third of MHAs and FIP Stepdown participants have a special diet, due to food allergies, caloric needs, and medical issues (e.g., low sodium for heart or renal conditions). FSU can only provide hot incentive meals and snacks in bulk to the FIP-Stepdown modules and cannot cater the meals and snacks to the medical or religious needs of each MHA or the program

participants with whom MHAs may share their food. There are also concerns that the incentive meals and snacks together with daily meals exceed the recommended daily caloric intake. FSU is working with CHS staff and dieticians to address allergen and caloric concerns.

Finally, the Sheriff's Department states that providing enhanced food incentives presents funding challenges. Currently, the Department's budget contains no line-item budget set aside to support the FIP-Stepdown program MHAs or program participants, and high-quality snacks are significantly more expensive than the cost of the average single meal. With the program at CRDF and TTCF projected to expand, these costs are expected to rise. Of course, the Sheriff's Department could prioritize funding these incentives for MHAs over other current priorities, especially if FSU obtains some cost offset from less food waste as it reported.

Provision 1.b.

Provision 1.b. of the Board motion directs the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with the Department, CHS, and with input from the MHAs, to provide the Board with a feasibility and implementation report back on partnering with an academic/institutional partner to provide MHAs with a certification program for future employment or academic pursuits.

Certification Program

The MHAs expressed interest in working with an academic provider to receive additional training to support their role and to obtain credentials necessary to secure post-incarceration employment. Gender Responsive Services (GRS), the unit that oversees educational and rehabilitative services at CRDF (similar to Education Based Incarceration (EBI) at TTCF, Men's Central Jail, Pitches Detention Center (PDC) East, PDC North, PDC South, and North County Correctional Facility), conducted preliminary research to determine what certifications align best with the MHAs' role and provide the strongest opportunity for post-release employment. GRS found that several certification programs would provide the MHAs with supportive education, although some require licensure that the MHAs' criminal histories would preclude.

GRS identified the CalMHSA Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification and a Drug and Alcohol Counselor Certification as the certifications most consistent with the support that the MHAs provide in FIP-Stepdown. The MHAs' criminal histories would not preclude them from obtaining employment as a Peer Support Specialist or a Drug and

Alcohol Counselor. Moreover, the MHAs' lived experience enhances their candidacy for employment in conjunction with either of these certifications. Medi-Cal recognizes Peer Support Specialists and Drug and Alcohol Counselors as billed providers, so they are common positions that could provide the MHAs with employment opportunities in the community upon release.

The Sheriff's Department has worked jointly with the CHS Mental Health Director to implement a Peer Support Specialist Certification Program for the MHAs. Volunteers associated with Tarzana Treatment Centers College (TTCC) already help to support the MHAs with training. The Department recognized that it could formalize that training with TTCC to provide MHAs with a Peer Support Specialist Certification, with course materials provided by Prism Way and with outside funding from California Department of Health Services through Continuity Consulting. TTCC is in the process of completing a Request For a Statement of Interest (RFSI), subject to the Department's review and approval, to formally provide the Peer Support Specialist Certification to the MHA.

In an effort to find additional providers, CHS reached out to all agencies approved to provide a Peer Support Specialist Certification in Los Angeles and held a meeting with eleven agencies that expressed an interest in providing the certification on January 31, 2024, where it directed all agencies interested in providing the Peer Support Specialist Certification at no cost to the Sheriff's Department to submit an RFSI.

The Sheriff's Department and CHS report they will continue to explore providing the MHAs with a Drug and Alcohol Counselor Certification. This certification requires an internship, in which each MHA would need a clinical supervisor to oversee their work and provide one hour of individual clinical supervision per week. To provide the MHAs with this certification, CHS would require budgeting an additional staff member to act as a clinical supervisor for the MHAs.

The Sheriff's Department has identified a TTCF Lieutenant to act as an interim Project Director but is still working to identify a Project Manager and additional staff, which the Department states will require additional funding.

Furthering Academic Education

Office of Inspector General staff connected with the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good at California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA). This institute operates Project Rebound, which provides baccalaureate education to justice-impacted people in CDCR custody and assists formerly incarcerated students in

matriculating and graduating from Cal State LA. The Project Rebound Director met with several of the MHAs to discuss the opportunity for involvement with the program, both in CDCR and within the community, and volunteered to provide individual college counseling for each MHA.

Although EBI reported connecting with a local college, it did not provide additional information on the feasibility and implementation of providing post-secondary education to MHAs.

GRS currently provides limited educational opportunities to the MHAs at CRDF. For example, many MHAs at CRDF participate in college courses, life skills classes, and therapeutic activities. Due to scheduling conflicts, these offerings are not as robust as the opportunities available to students living in the educational modules. GRS reports that an analysis is underway to determine additional programs and services that may be of interest to the MHAs at CRDF and how technology could be leveraged to expand the breadth and depth of services.

Provision 1.c.

Provision 1.c. of the Board motion directs the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with the Department, CHS, and with input from the MHAs, to provide the Board with a feasibility and implementation report back on providing consistent, frequent, and longer contact visits for MHAs to meet with family and friends.

The MHAs reported that “[contact] visits are . . . the strongest forms of support and care [the MHAs] currently receive.”⁵ For approximately the past two years, the MHAs at TTCF have received one 30-minute contact visit with two attendees per month. As a result of this Board motion, the Sheriff’s Department likewise approved providing the MHAs at CRDF with one 30-minute contact visit with two attendees per month.

To reduce strain on the Sheriff’s Department resources, the MHAs at TTCF have suggested communal visits, where several MHAs conduct their visits in a larger space. The MHAs propose that this allows for the MHAs to engage in longer visits, provide a space for MHAs and family members to offer community support, and reduce Department staffing constraints, as deputies currently transport individual MHAs to a

⁵ This quote was taken from written materials provided by the MHAs at TTCF as part of their collaboration with the Office of Inspector General in response to the Board motion.

distant area in TTCF for their visits. This visiting structure mirrors that provided at CDCR, where visits generally occur in communal spaces. The Sheriff's Department reports that it has neither the space nor the infrastructure to conduct communal visits at TTCF.

The Sheriff's Department reports that it does have the resources to increase the number of 30-minute contact visits for each MHA from one per month to two per month and will begin providing the additional visits in March. The Department also reports that these contact visits remain subject to staffing levels.

Current Sheriff's Department unit orders establish that only parents, grandparents, and children are permitted to engage in contact visits. Several MHAs have reported close familial relationships with extended family members, such as nieces and nephews. The Department has indicated that it will revise this unit order, but it is unclear whether the unit order revisions will simply allow a greater number of family members at each visit or whether it will allow extended family to participate in contact visits. Similarly, several MHAs have unmarried romantic partners, and the Department has not indicated whether the policy revisions would allow partners, girlfriends, boyfriends, or fiancés to participate in contact visits. The Sheriff's Department definitively rejected the suggestion that MHAs be permitted to engage in contact visits with friends due to security concerns, despite departmental screening of all visitors prior to contact visits.

Several of the MHAs do not have family members who live locally or are able to attend contact visits. Because of this, the Sheriff's Department indicated a willingness to facilitate virtual visits for MHAs using the Inmate Video Visitation System (IVVS) that is currently used for video tele-conferencing visits. The Department reports it requires additional resources within the Correctional Innovative Technology Unit to schedule these visits.

Provision 1.d.

Provision 1.d. of the Board motion directs the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with the Department, CHS, and with input from the MHAs, to provide the Board with a feasibility and implementation report back on providing mental health, wellness, and self-care support for MHAs.

Mental Health

MHAs currently meet individually with a volunteer from the Prism Way, who they report is instrumental in supporting their mental health. CHS reports that it could also assist in

providing mental health support to the MHAs through one-on-one counseling services with CHS interns and group meetings under a CHS Mental Health Clinical Supervisor.

Currently, CHS supervises nine psychology students from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (CSPP) who are completing their practicum (second year internship). While the students' primary role has been to administer support groups to people in custody with mental illness, they have expressed an interest in opportunities to provide one-on-one treatment. These psychology students come from a forensic specialization within their Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) program that focuses on practice within the legal system, including with justice-involved individuals. To implement this program, each student will be matched with one to three MHAs to provide treatment. Based on availability and interest of the MHA, this treatment may be weekly or biweekly. Students providing treatment will each attend one-on-one supervision with a CHS Supervising Psychologist and engage in group supervision every other week. CHS anticipates that this program will be fully implemented in February 2024. Though the students' internship is completed at the end of the academic year, CHS is pursuing Supplemental Site status with CSPP to allow students to continue through the summer to gain required hours for their degree and provide continuity in treatment for the MHAs. CHS staff are currently interviewing students for Fall 2024, when this partnership will continue.

In addition to this one-on-one treatment, each facility will assign a Mental Health Clinical Supervisor to oversee and provide support to the MHAs. The supervisor will hold weekly meetings with the MHAs to address concerns or needs that might arise.

Wellness

The MHAs have reported that having access to proper gym equipment, including safe weights, resistance bands, and exercise machines, would help them achieve their health and wellness needs and provide stress-relief from the demands of their role. The MHAs also expressed interest in participating in health and wellness classes, namely yoga, with volunteer fitness providers.

The Sheriff's Department proposed purchasing an air strider elliptical, an elliptical cross trainer, and an exercise bike from Ripco & Associates, which manufactures institutional fitness equipment for correctional facilities. The Department states that it will not allow the MHAs access to soft weights, including slam balls and soft medicine balls, due to safety concerns. The Department will allow the MHAs access to resistance bands if they are secured and accounted for when not in use. The Department reports that it requires

funding to purchase and install exercise equipment, and that it would facilitate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for fitness providers who are interested in volunteering within the facilities. EBI reports that it plans to secure a fitness provider to facilitate fitness classes with the MHAs.

The MHAs also report that their role requires heightened levels of physical activity, due to being on their feet for a substantial part of the day. Presently, the Sheriff's Department provides people in custody with plastic slippers, which also serve as shower slippers. While many of the MHAs can purchase institutionally approved sneakers, several of the MHAs are indigent and therefore do not have proper supportive shoes. The Office of Inspector General discussed this concern with an Assistant Sheriff, who indicated that the Department will not provide the MHAs with institutionally approved supportive shoes without additional funding.

Self-Care

The flagship FIP-Stepdown module in TTCF provides FIP-Stepdown Patients, MHAs, and Department staff with a clean and therapeutic environment. In this module, the Sheriff's Department replaced steel institutional fixtures with correctional furniture, allowed MHAs and patients to adorn the walls with art, and provided MHAs and patients access to books and games. The MHAs report that this environment provides a more therapeutic living space for them and the patients and recommend mirroring the flagship FIP-Stepdown environment in the expanded FIP-Stepdown modules. The Board likewise recognizes that "colorful paint, murals, aquariums, soft furniture, plants, and activity tables," serve as "key therapeutic elements [creating] a therapeutic physical space."⁶ The Sheriff's Department reports that it ordered furniture for the additional FIP-Stepdown modules, and that it will supply the additional FIP-Stepdown Pods with plants, herb gardens, and institutionally safe pets (fish and turtles). The Department reports that some supplies were already ordered but that it requires additional funding to purchase ancillary therapeutic elements such as plants, herb gardens, and fish.

The MHAs report that access to basic hygiene supplies, including shampoo, soap, deodorant, and lotion, would support self-care goals for both them and the patients in the program. The MHAs explain that the stigma associating mentally ill people with a lack of hygiene negatively impacts the patients within the FIP-Stepdown program, so

⁶See Board motion: [*Supporting the Expansion of FIP Stepdown and HOH Dorm Units at the Los Angeles County Jails*](#) (June 27, 2023)

that MHAs emphasize hygiene and self-care to patients within the program and encourage hygienic practices and healthy habits in the FIP-Stepdown curriculum.

Sheriff's Department policy generally requires that people in custody supply themselves with personal care and hygiene items through the commissary, unless they are indigent.⁷ Indigent people in custody who are unable to purchase personal care and hygiene items through the commissary are to be "provided the needed item upon request" from module officers, who are responsible for ensuring that "personal care items are available for distribution upon request."⁸ If a person in custody requests hygiene supplies from the Department, the cost of the hygiene supplies is automatically deducted from the person's account once money is added to their account. Additionally, although the Department distributes a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, a comb, shaving implements, and deodorant,⁹ people in custody report that distributed products are ineffective. Thus, in practice, the MHAs often share their own hygiene supplies with the patients within the program. The Department has historically supported volunteers who have distributed hygiene products to the FIP-Stepdown program at CRDF. The Department reports that it requires additional funding to distribute additional hygiene products to MHAs for distribution to the FIP-Stepdown patients.

Provision 1.e.

Provision 1.e. of the Board motion directs the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with the Department, CHS, and with input from the MHAs, to provide the Board with a feasibility and implementation report back on providing rotational scheduling for Mental Health Assistants for respite from their responsibilities and duties, including increasing the number of MHAs to achieve this.

In addition to providing daily programming opportunities to patients within FIP-Stepdown, the MHAs' stay on-call at all times to respond to patients within their living pod experiencing a crisis. The Sheriff's Department reports that, to prevent the MHAs from being over-utilized, it will implement a schedule limiting programming hours from 8:00 am to 11:00 am and 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm each weekday. The Department

⁷ Per Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Policy, "[a]n inmate shall be considered indigent if he has less on account with the cashier than the standardized established price needed to purchase an indigent [hygiene] kit." See [Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Manual of Policies and Procedures, 5-13/080.00, "Indigent Inmates."](#)

⁸ See [Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Manual of Policy and Procedures, 5-13/090.00, "Personal Care Items and Supplies for Inmates."](#)

⁹ See [Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Manual of Policy and Procedures, 5-13/090.00, "Personal Care Items and Supplies for Inmates."](#)

additionally proposed an on-call rotational schedule, to provide coverage while allowing MHAs with periodic days off when they would not be on call.

It is essential that the Sheriff's Department recruit additional MHAs to provide on-call coverage to give MHAs a day off from assisting with a response to a patient crisis. The Department stated that it has circulated an MHA recruitment video across facilities to increase interest in volunteering in the program but did not provide any more specific information on an MHA recruitment plan, nor did the Department state how many persons in custody were shown the recruitment video.

Provision 1.f.i.

Provision 1.f.i. of the Board motion directs the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with County Counsel, to include a feasibility and implementation plan for MHAs who decide to complete their prison sentences in county jail to be allowed to serve in their role and be able to receive CDCR credits for early release. County Counsel is providing its own report to the Board regarding the feasibility of MHAs remaining in county jail to complete their prison sentences. Current laws and regulations do not allow for persons sentenced to state prison to earn the same credits that accelerate their release date from state prison while housed in a county facility. We refer the Board to the report being provided by County Counsel for an overview of the program, laws that govern it, and the specifics on overcoming the challenges presented by current statutes and regulations.

Provision 1.f.ii.

Provision 1.f.ii. of the Board motion directs the Office of Inspector General, in collaboration with County Counsel, to include a feasibility and implementation plan for expansion of the County's partnership with CDCR to grant MHAs access to CDCR resources, such as the Parole Board and counselors, especially for those who have some level of involvement with CDCR, e.g.: serving a prison sentence or appealing a sentence. County Counsel is providing its own report to the Board regarding the feasibility of expanding the County's partnership with CDCR to provide MHAs access to CDCR resources while MHAs are housed in county jail. The Office of Inspector General has coordinated with the Sheriff's Department and the Board of Parole Hearings to provide virtual parole hearings for persons housed in the county jail at the time of their scheduled parole hearing. However, CDCR reported it does not have a system for providing CDCR resources or case counselors to people in local jail facilities. We refer the Board to the report being provided by County Counsel for the specifics on overcoming the challenges presented by current statutes and regulations.

Provision 2.

Provision 2. of the Board motion directs the Chief Executive Office in collaboration with OIG, Sheriff and DHS-CHS to report back, in writing, during the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Final Changes Budget, on the fiscal impact and potential funding sources for subsections a-f, including the use of AB 109 funds and other sources. Other than indicating that its current budget is insufficient to provide the incentives discussed in this report, the Sheriff's Department did not provide the Office of Inspector General with cost estimates for any of the incentives. For some of the incentives, the cost would appear to be something that the Sheriff's Department could decide to prioritize.

c: Robert G. Luna, Sheriff
 Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer
 Jeff Levinson, Interim Executive Officer
 Dawyn R. Harrison, County Counsel
 Tim Belavich, Director, Correctional Health Services
 Sharmaine Moseley, Executive Director, Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission