

# GRAND JURY REPORT FOR CLACKAMAS COUNTY CORRECTIONS SYSTEM

November, 2012

## Overview

As a grand jury we inspected all of the County's correctional facilities including: the Clackamas County Jail; the Clackamas County Corrections Facility; the Clackamas County Juvenile Intake and Assessment center (JIAC) and the Clackamas County Courthouse Jail. After our inspection, we believe our County correctional system is in solid shape with adequate funding and support for most of our correctional programs and facilities, except for our County Jail. Given this fact, the focus of our report is on the Clackamas County Jail.

## Clackamas County Jail

We believe the sheriff's office has done a commendable job creating an efficient, safe county jail with limited staff and financial resources. Specific areas of note and strength include:

- **Continuous use of practices to optimize financial resources and reduce costs. These include:**
  - *Smart application of digital and emerging technology.* For example employing video technology to conduct video arraignments that reduce the costs for transporting inmates to and from the jail. The use of video-taping at intake to reduce litigation over inmate money concerns, and the use of video visits to streamline the cost of moving inmates from cellblocks to visitation areas.
  - *Wise practice of generic pharmaceutical protocols.* By moving to more generic, rather than brand pharmaceuticals, the sheriff's office has saved more than \$50,000 in 2011
  - *Partnership with contractors to streamline the cost of inmate health care.* The jail has recently privatized its health care delivery to Corizon – a national provider. This move has improved inmate care while also reducing costs.
  - *Smart food management and budgeting.* The jail continues to cut food costs and with greater food storage would be able to continue to find greater efficiencies.
- **Pursuit of innovative solutions for managing an increasingly "at risk" inmate population and limited jail capacity. These include:**
  - *Alternative methods for managing inmate population.* For example, the jail employs electronic home detection (EHD) as an alternative to incarceration. Using EHD sophisticated monitoring technologies such as: voice verification and remote alcohol testing radio frequency and GPS tracking, the jail saves approximately \$100 per inmate, per day. To manage an inmate on EHD it costs the jail \$25 per diem, compared \$125 per day for an inmate in the jail.
  - *More effective triage of mentally ill through early medical assessment at booking.* These early assessments are also being done by mental health and medical professionals whereas before they were being done by unqualified jail personnel. This means this "at risk" population is identified and better managed earlier in process.
  - *Continuous pursuit of inmate education and in-jail workforce opportunities.* The jail has added two additional classrooms to expand education programs for inmates. The jail continues to embrace online and web-based learning to broaden inmate learning opportunities while also managing costs. And the jail offers inmate 'trustees' the opportunity to do meaningful, skills-building work inside the jail such as food service, general maintenance and laundry.

- *Movement towards evidence-based, best practices for better jail management.* This includes the sheriff's office participating in the Oregon state Sheriff's Association (OSSA) task force to identify common jail standards, best practices and lessons learned.

Despite these notable strengths, we as grand jurors believe that given the county's 380,000 population the community is underserved by the current jail system because of a lack of funding for the correctional system, as well as a lack of clear, consistent support from the county on correctional issues. As a result, we the jurors found the following issues of note and concern.

- *Limited and under-utilized jail capacity.* Currently the jail has 484 beds of which 50 beds have never been used. These beds were part of a jail addition in 2008 and have never been occupied due to a lack of funding for needed staff. Another point of fact, our county has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest bed to population ratio in the state.
- *The practice of forced inmate release has been reduced, but remains an area of concern.* Currently the jail is releasing inmates early due to a lack of capacity despite the fact they have unused beds. We believe this practice is a public safety concern.
- *Outdated "linear" design of the jail* inhibits ability for jail staff to manage inmates safely. The linear design also hinders staff safety. Based on our discussion with the jail's under-sheriff the facility in its current design "is an accident waiting to happen."
- *Aging facility.* The jail was built in 1959 and has undergone a series of patchwork remodels over the course of the last -- years. This approach has resulted in a 'band-aid' solution instead of directing needed funds for constructing a new, safer facility that better meets the needs of the county.
- *Costs of keeping chronically-ill inmates well are increasing.* These costs are due to taking inmates out of jail to get care for things they can't treat within the facility. According to the sheriff's grand jury inspection report these costs have shown a progressive upward trend that will continue to tax the correctional system budget.
- *The rise of mentally-ill inmate population.* The cost of managing this growing inmate population is a real and significant drain on the jail staff and resources.
- *Staff overtime.* Currently the jail spends more than 1.25 million annually on over time. This equates to approximately \$8,000 of overtime per jail employee.

***Based on these findings, we the grand jury submit to the court and county the following recommendations:***

1. *Improve proactive hiring practices* to ensure a continuous pipeline of qualified candidates for jail staff. Currently the recruitment and hiring process takes more than a year and as a result jail operations suffer (i.e. substantial overtime costs). Having a continuous pipeline of talent ensures that jail positions are filled immediately, when needed and overtime costs are mitigated. We believe a key aspect of improving the hiring process will require cooperation and better communication between the Sheriff's office and county officials.
2. *Continue to reduce forced releases* by maximizing the 50 beds currently unused in the jail.
3. *Work to improve the relationship between the Sheriff's office and the County Administrators office* to ensure budgets and goals aligned, and that the appropriation of funds for public safety are being used consistently, accurately and in the best interest of the corrections system.
4. *Expedite the construction of a new county jail.* Based on information in this report we believe the community needs to shorten the timeline for the construction of new county jail.

**Community Corrections**

We believe the community corrections program provides a great value to our community through its work release program and corrections substance and abuse program (CSAP). We viewed the CSAP program as an innovative and effective approach for treating and rehabilitating high-risk offenders. The value of evidence-based practices and methods, such as the reality model, were apparent when we heard from Ryan, one of the residential program participants. Clearly, the model was enabling him to rethink and change his life.

We viewed the residential facilities as clean, safe and adequate. As citizens we hope this kind of program continues.

#### **Courthouse Jail**

We believe that the courthouse jail remodel is necessary and wise use of general fund resources. As was noted in last year's grand jury report, we believe the courthouse jail remodel will alleviate the insufficient space and lack of security through the construction of new holding cells and sally port.

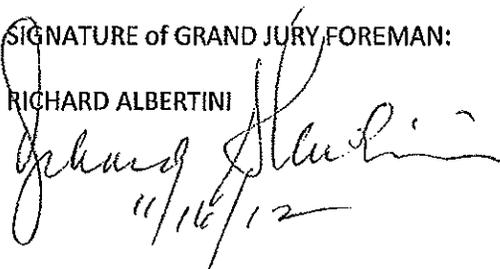
#### **Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center**

We believe the juvenile intake and assessment center provides our community with a well-run, efficient program to provide early detection and intervention for at risk youth. We were impressed by the compassionate and highly-qualified nature of the staff and the innovative programs they are spearheading to minimize repeat visits and offenses. We were also impressed with the network of information – via shared national databases – to help identify runaways and victims of sex trafficking.

Their programs instill 'offender' accountability ensuring they give back to their victims and community, while also providing needed support and education to change specific and emerging "criminal" behaviors. Their programs also take into account and provide support for impacted families. As citizens we hope this program continues.

SIGNATURE of GRAND JURY FOREMAN:

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11/16/12