



Trinity County Behavioral Health Services

MENTAL HEALTH · SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS · PREVENTION

Connie Smith, MPA
Director

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Trinity County
Administration and
Board of Supervisors

January 29, 2024

Michael B. Harper, Judge
Trinity Superior Court
PO Box 1258
Weaverville, CA 96093

Re: 2023 Civil Grand Jury Mental Health Report

Dear Judge Harper,

This letter is in response to the 2023 Civil Grand Jury Mental Health Report dated December 15, 2023. This investigation was presented to me as general department head information gathering, so it was not clear to me that the real focus of this investigation was about crisis services and the relationship between the Behavioral Health Department and the Hospital until this report came out. I would like to provide this response to clarify the efforts and intentions of the Behavioral Health Department.

The Behavioral Health Department provides crisis intervention services at the hospital emergency department that include patient crisis evaluation and 5150 determinations. Response time to the hospital is between 15-45 minutes after contact. Crisis staff use standard clinical tools to determine if the patient is a danger to self, others or gravely disabled. If a patient is determined to meet the criteria for a 5150 hold, crisis staff write the hold and then return to the department to begin looking for available acute hospital placements. The patient remains at the hospital until an acute placement can be secured. Unfortunately, this can take longer than desired due to a lack of available beds in the state.

Behavioral Health agrees that this is not an ideal process, however we do not receive funding or reimbursement for staff who are just waiting at the hospital. We are the Medi-Cal provider for the County, and unfortunately, this is not a Medi-Cal recognized service. I have met with the Trinity Hospital CEO, Aaron Rogers, and we mutually agree that we will try to stretch our resources as much as possible, however we will only

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be able to provide patient monitoring to the extent that resources allow. Behavioral Health is working with the Hospital to establish both a crisis room inside the hospital and available staffing to cover patient wait times whenever possible. CEO Rogers and I are developing an agreement to define our partnership at this time.

The Behavioral Health Department and crisis team remain committed to providing the best emergency care for all psychiatric patients, and we look forward to a renewed partnership with the Trinity Hospital to ensure our mutual goals of superior client care.

Sincerely,



Connie Smith, Director
Trinity County Behavioral Health Services
(530) 623-1362
csmith@trinitycounty-ca.gov

cc:

Trent Tuthill, Trinity County Administrative Officer
Trinity County Clerk of the Board
Margaret Long, Trinity County Counsel
Debra Klein, Trinity County Deputy Director, Clinical Services

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