

County of Santa Clara

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Megan Doyle
Clerk of the Board

September 15, 2015

The Honorable Rise Jones Pichon
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: Grand Jury Report: Child Abuse and Neglect Call Center, Can Every Call Be Answered?

Dear Judge Pichon:

At the September 15, 2015 meeting of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors (Item No. 23), the Board adopted the response from the County Administration to the Final Grand Jury Report and recommendations relating to Child Abuse and Neglect Call Center, Can Every Call Be Answered?

As directed by the Board of Supervisors and on behalf of the Board President, our office is forwarding to you the enclosed certified copy of the response to the Final Grand Jury Report. This response constitutes the response of the Board of Supervisors, consistent with provisions of California Penal Section 933(c).

If there are any questions concerning this issue, please contact our office at 299-5001 or by email at michele.neighbors@cob.sccgov.org.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele Neighbors".

Michele Neighbors
Deputy Clerk, Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Clara

Enclosures

FILED
SEP 18 2015

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY BRITNEY HUELBIG DEPUTY

County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency



333 West Julian Street
San Jose, California 95110-2335

DATE: September 1, 2015

TO: Gary A. Graves, Chief Operating Officer

FROM: Robert Menicocci, Social Services Agency Director *RM*
Lori Medina, Director, Department of Family and Children's Services

SUBJECT: Response to Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report

Background:

On June 15, 2015, the Grand Jury released its final report, "**Child Abuse and Neglect Call Center, Can Every Call Be Answered?**" In developing the report, the Grand Jury reviewed the Harvey Rose Audit and monthly statistics provided by the CAN Center, toured the CAN Center, and interviewed CAN Center staff and staff at Alameda County, San Mateo County, Bill Wilson Center, and United Way 2-1-1. Their report outlines the following six (6) recommendations:

1. The DFCS should continue to improve operations to ensure that all CAN Center calls are answered.
2. The DFCS should ensure CAN Center staff is available to answer calls 24 hours per day, seven days a week.
3. The DFCS should directly answer both mandated and non-mandated reporter's calls.
4. The DFCS should establish a policy to make three or four attempts to contact voicemail callers in their county.
5. The DFCS should establish a policy to follow-up on abandoned calls.
6. The DFCS should ensure that the "DFCS CAN Center & Referrals Monthly Statistical Summary" be revised to include After Hours calls, and average number of calls and dispositions per social worker, to provide adequate information to manage staffing

On August 25, 2015, the Board of Supervisors approved the following response to the Civil Grand Jury recommendations.

Final Response to the Civil Grand Jury Recommendations:

1. **Recommendation:** Continue to improve operations to ensure that all CAN Center calls are answered.

Implementation Plan:

- **Short-Term:** The DFCS will provide coverage through an Extra Help social worker to assist with answering calls.

Approved: 09/15/2015

- The CAN Center implemented some of the recommendations from the initial Harvey Rose audit, including increasing staff by seven social workers, one supervisor, two data office specialists, and one Office Specialist III. The seven social workers were added to answer calls, while three clerical positions were added to improve timeliness of Emergency Response (ER) social workers that responded to child abuse referrals. Since the initial audit, the CAN Center increased the percent of calls answered from 59% in 2013 to 91% in May 2015. The Extra Help position can assist with the continued improvement while the CAN Center has vacant positions.
- **Long-Term:** 1) The DFCS will request an additional screening social worker during the FY 2016 mid-year budget process to answer calls; and 2) The DFCS will request a Client Services Technician (CST) during the FY 2016 mid-year budget process to answer the phone and obtain contact information.
 - The addition of one screening social worker would provide the CAN Center with three full units of trained Master's level (MSW) social workers to answer phones and conduct screening assessments.
 - A CST would also make social workers more efficient by assisting them with their clerical tasks such as sending faxes, correspondence with mandated reporters, and sending cross-reports to law enforcement and Community Care Licensing. The CST could also assist with preventing abandoned calls by answering the phone during high volume hours to obtain contact information from callers and inform them that a social worker will return their calls as soon as one is available.

Implementation Progress: The Extra Help position is scheduled to start in September 2015. The DFCS will submit a request for the social work and CST positions in the FY 2016 mid-year budget process.

2. **Recommendation:** Ensure that CAN Center staff is available to answer calls 24/7.

Implementation Plan:

- **Short-Term:** The DFCS will continue having trained social work staff answer all calls to the CAN Center.
 - The DFCS believes that trained child welfare social workers should answer every call of child abuse and neglect. All social work staff answering calls are trained in child abuse reporting laws and the Child Family Practice Model (CFPM), and they can make the necessary clinical assessments.
- **Long-Term:** The DFCS will formulate a 24/7 plan to include after hours coverage for the CAN Center and ER.
 - Recommendations for the 24/7 plan are still being finalized. Once the recommendations are finalized, the DFCS will work with interested stakeholders to receive input before formalizing or implementing the plan.

Implementation Progress: CAN Center calls will be answered by trained social work staff at all hours while a formal 24/7 plan is finalized.

3. **Recommendation:** Directly answer both mandated and non-mandated reporters' calls.

Implementation Plan:

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Dave Cortese, Ken Yeager, S. Joseph Simitian
 County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

- **Short-Term:** The DFCS will work with SSA IS Telecom to create a single queue for calls to the CAN Center and to implement technology that allows callers to immediately leave contact information for a return call.
 - The current system prioritizes calls from mandated reporters so that required teachers, doctors, therapists, and other professionals can report child maltreatment as soon as practically possible. However, placing the calls in a single queue would allow screening social workers to give equal priority to all callers. The DFCS will explore modifying the existing automated call system to notify callers to immediately press the “#” key if they want to leave a voicemail or provide a call back number so a social worker can call them back. This will provide callers the option of receiving a call back from a social worker as soon as one is available rather than remaining on hold.

- **Long-Term:** 1) The DFCS will request an additional screening social worker during the FY 2016 mid-year budget process to answer calls; and 2) The DFCS will request a CST during the FY 2016 mid-year budget process to answer the phone and obtain contact information.
 - The DFCS believes that an additional social worker would ensure that more of the calls are answered.
 - The DFCS believes that all calls of child abuse and neglect are important and should be answered by screening social workers. However, a CST would help to answer the phone during periods of high call volume to obtain contact information and inform callers that a social worker will contact them when available.

Implementation Progress: On August 26, 2015, the DFCS met with SSA IS Telecom. They indicated that a single queue could be established. They will also implement technology that allows call back options. An update will be provided to the DFCS by September 24, 2015.

4. **Recommendation:** Establish a policy to make 3-4 attempts to contact voicemail callers.

Implementation Plan:

- **Short-Term:** 1) The DFCS will establish a policy to make 3-4 attempts to contact voicemail callers; and 2) The DFCS will provide coverage through an Extra Help social worker to help return voicemail calls.
 - The current policy is to return any voicemail calls by the end of the day. The addition of seven social workers contributed to increasing successful voicemail contact from 76% in 2013 to 90% in 2014, and 94% in 2015. The DFCS will change the policy to require a minimum of 3-4 attempts to successfully contact any caller who left a voicemail.

- **Long-Term:** The DFCS will request an additional screening social worker during the FY 2016 mid-year budget process to answer calls. The DFCS believes that this new policy can be supported with an additional social worker who would ensure that more of the voicemails are returned.

Implementation Progress: The Extra Help position is scheduled to start in September 2015. For the FY 2016 mid-year budget request, the DFCS will submit a request for the social work and CST positions.

5. **Recommendation:** Establish a policy to follow-up on abandoned calls.

Implementation Plan:

- The DFCS will implement a follow-up policy for abandoned calls pending an opinion from County Counsel. The DFCS had an initial consult with County Counsel which raised legal concerns that returning abandoned calls may violate Penal Code § 11167(d), which protects the confidentiality of reporters. This concern arises because phone numbers can be shared by multiple people or households, and screening social workers cannot ensure they would be contacting the individual who made the abandoned call. Clinically, this is also concerning because in cases involving domestic violence, physical abuse, or sexual assault, this contact could alert the alleged perpetrator and instigate negative consequences for the caller and/or children.
- The DFCS will work with SSA IS Telecom to find a technological solution to identify phone numbers from abandoned calls. The DFCS will also implement technology that allows call back options. Once implemented, this feature should help reduce hold times and abandoned calls.

Implementation Progress: On August 26, 2015, the DFCS met with SSA IS Telecom. They will work on identifying how to follow-up with abandoned calls and provide an update to the DFCS by September 24, 2015.

6. **Recommendation:** Ensure that the "DFCS CAN Center & Referrals Monthly Statistical Summary" be revised to include After Hours calls, and average number of calls and dispositions per social worker, to provide adequate information to manage staffing.

Implementation Plan:

- **Short-Term:** The DFCS will add the After Hours calls, and average number of calls and dispositions per social worker beginning October 2015 utilizing currently available tracking mechanisms.
- **Long-Term:** The DFCS will work with SSA Information Systems (IS) Telecom to discuss routing After Hours calls through CUIC to provide consistent data and to discuss incorporating the requested data in its monthly reports without including specific social worker information.

Implementation Progress: In July 2015, the After Hours Program was informed that data collection needs to occur to include the data into the monthly reports beginning in October 2015. On August 26, 2015, the DFCS met with SSA IS Telecom and they will work on the monthly summary and will look into how to route After Hours calls through CUIC. An update will be provided to the DFCS by September 24, 2015.

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original.

ATTEST: Megan Doyle
Clerk of the Board

By: Michelle Neighbors
Deputy Clerk

Date: SEP 15 2015