

EL DORADO COUNTY GRAND JURY 2013-2014

PLACERVILLE OUT-PATIENT MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY

Case Number GJ-13-07

REASON FOR REPORT

There have been many news stories and much media attention over the past expressing concern regarding the lack of treatment and housing for mentally ill people in the United States. Members of the El Dorado Grand Jury wanted to identify the types of programs and facilities available in this county for individuals manifesting signs of mental illness.

BACKGROUND

Grand Jury members visited the El Dorado County Out-Patient Mental Health Facility on November 11, 2013. This facility handles both juvenile and adult clients, and provides counseling services, as well as medication.

This facility is newly leased (October, 2013) space for the county. It is located at 768 Pleasant Valley Road in Diamond Springs. The prior facility was located at 670 Placerville Drive in Placerville. A review of relevant financial material regarding the new and old leases indicates that the county will save approximately \$682,000 over the 10 year term of this new lease. At the time of our visit, the county mental health group had been in this new facility just 2 weeks.

We interviewed two staff members who were on site at the time of our visit. We were escorted throughout the entire building to inspect the new facility, and discussed the space as well as the various programs available for clients. There are 48 people on staff.

FINDINGS

1. Having just been refurbished, the building is in excellent condition, although its unusual architectural design does not facilitate easy accessibility throughout the structure.
2. A new well-equipped community activity center has been established for adult clients.
3. There is a confidentiality issue in that some of the areas where service providers and patients discuss issues and treatment are not sufficiently soundproofed.
4. There is no interior access between floors one and two. Programs for adults are on the lower floor, and parents and children are seen on the upper floor. However, staff has to go outdoors to access one floor to the other; walking across the parking lot or using the uncovered exterior stairway.
5. Since there are separate entrances for both the adult programs on the lower floor, and the juvenile programs on the second floor, the facility has been certified as ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant.
6. The parking capacity at the facility (which was not adequate at the time of our visit) has now been increased to fit the building's use needs.

7. Outdoor direction signs at the facility are nonexistent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Soundproof the areas in the building where service providers interact with clients.
2. Install outdoor direction signs so clients can easily determine where to park and access the proper segment of the building.
3. Cover the exterior stairway to ameliorate safety concerns in inclement weather.
4. After this department has been in this new space for six months, investigate the need and feasibility of creating an interior stairway/elevator for interior access between floors one and two.

RESPONSES

Responses to both findings and recommendations to this Report are required by law in accordance with California Penal Code §933 and §933.05. Address responses to:

The Honorable Suzanne N. Kingsbury, presiding judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court, 1354 Johnson Blvd., South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

This Report has been addressed to the El Dorado Department of Health and Human Services for review and response, and provided to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

The Presiding Judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court additionally requests that the responses be sent electronically as a "Word" file or "PDF" file to facilitate the economical and timely distribution of such responses. Please email responses to the El Dorado County Grand Jury at:

courtadmin@eldoradocourt.org