



STATUS UPDATE

REPORT TITLE: 2022-2023 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – “Public Guardian, The Final Helping Hand: A Mandate to Care”

RESPONSE BY: Health Department and Department of Social Services

UPDATES TO: Recommendations: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7

RECOMMENDATIONS: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7

R1. Adult and Aging Services engage a licensed professional to provide all necessary Capacity Declarations for Adult Protective Services' clients and/or collaborate with existing professional resources in other County Departments to fill this need by December 31, 2023.

Response to R1: The Board agrees with this recommendation. Department of Social Services (DSS)/ Adult Protective Services (APS) will pursue engaging with and procuring a qualified licensed provider to provide the necessary and complete Capacity Declarations by December 31, 2023.

Update: DSS began the process for procuring a qualified licensed provider last year in July 2023. Since that time, they have obtained quotes from multiple providers. A scope of service has been developed, terms negotiated, and an agreement is being finalized. It is anticipated that the finalized agreement will be in place by the end of March 2024.

R2. The Public Guardian Bureau adopt an approved and accessible policies and procedures manual to standardize operations and assure that staff is fully aware of and compliant with the stated policies and procedures by December 31, 2023.

Response to R2: The recommendation has been implemented, All PGO policies are accessible. Staff will be reminded where to access policies and that policies must be consistently followed. The review of policies will occur during mandatory, biweekly staff meetings by December 31, 2023.

Update: Completed. Public Guardian Bureau staff were reminded that policies must be followed and where to access such policies on the Public Guardian's shared document drive. Continuous review of existing and new policies occurs during mandatory bi-weekly staff meetings.

R3. The Public Guardian Bureau initiate on-going mandatory training for staff on best practices for working with clients with mental illness by September 30, 2023.

Response to R3: The recommendation will be implemented by September 30, 2023.

Update: Ongoing. During the month of December, all PGB deputy staff became members of NAMI, National Alliance of Mental Illness to facilitate access to training, resources, and information on mental illnesses. Appropriate PGB staff will be attending NAMI's conference in June 2024.

R4. The Public Guardian Bureau initiate on-going mandatory training for staff on best practices for working with criminally charged clients by September 30, 2023.

Response to R4: The recommendation will be implemented. PGO will develop a written policy and seek training resources related to best practices in working with criminally charged clients by September 30, 2023.

Update: On-going trainings for criminally charged clients are presented by County Counsel to Deputy staff as needed during their mandatory bi-weekly meetings. A recent training was provided on March 11, 2024.

R5. The Public Guardian Bureau update its website and brochure to include information about Capacity Declarations, referral procedures, self-determination, and family as first option by December 31, 2023.

Response to R5: The recommendation will be implemented by December 31, 2023. The PGO will work with Health Department, Information Technology and Communications staff to update the website and brochure, providing a user-friendly overview of the referral process, legal process and what a conservatorship can or cannot do.

Update: In progress. PGB staff has been working with Health Information Technology staff to update its webpages and brochure. The PGB expects to have these activities completed by March 31, 2024.

R6. The Public Guardian Bureau evaluate the benefits of specialized caseload assignments versus mixed caseload assignments by December 31, 2023.

Response to R6: The recommendation has been implemented. It was determined that mixed caseloads are in the best interest of the public. The PGO has a relatively small staff with many senior deputies close to retirement. It is critical that staff are knowledgeable, trained and work a mixed assigned caseload. Lastly, the Class Specifications clearly indicates a deputy shall work a varying caseload.

Update: Completed. After review and discussion with staff and County Public Conservator/Guardian, it was determined that mixed caseloads are in the best interest of the public and the clients we serve.

R7. The Monterey County Health Department pursue mechanisms and options to have LPS conservatees housed within Monterey County to enable more family support, efficient use of staff time, and easier transition to lower level of care within the County by March 31, 2024.

Response to R7: The recommendation requires further analysis and discussions with Behavioral Health Bureau Placement team members and other stakeholders regarding viability of establishing additional capacity for varying levels of care needed to support our LPS conservatees in Monterey County. Discussions will be held by March 31, 2024.

Update: In progress. The Department received State funds to invest in Bridge Housing and a Mental Health Rehabilitation Facility (MHRF). About 110 units will become available under Bridge Housing by early 2025 and about 100 beds will become available at the MHRF in 2027.