

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Dr. Richard Pan
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
State Capitol, Room 5114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: County Public Administrator, Public Guardian, Public Conservator Programs: Ongoing State Funding Augmentation - SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Pan:

The County of Monterey urges your support for an ongoing State augmentation of county spending for Public Administrator, Public Guardian, Public Conservator (PA/PG/PC) programs; a first step in remediating the escalating needs of California's most vulnerable impaired adult populations. All 58 California counties are operating PA/PG/PC programs at full capacity and are struggling to meet the needs of the currently defined target populations in their communities. In total, California counties are spending approximately \$200 million annually to provide critical safety net PA/PG/PC services to California's most at risk dependent adults and their estates.

County PA/PG/PC programs have exceeded maximum capacity and are struggling to meet the growing demand for their safety net services. Appointed by the California Superior Court, PA/PG/PC programs serve defenseless individuals who are psychiatrically, medically and/or cognitively impaired, or are deceased, who are unable to act in their own best interests, and/or have been the victim of abuse or neglect, and/or are criminal offenders who cannot be restored to competency, and/or have no other person willing or able to act for them, and/or have no other person willing or able to protect their assets from loss or exploitation.

State investment in county PA/PG/PC services is essential in order to meet the growing needs of California's impaired adult population. Without meaningful, ongoing, augmented funding, counties will not be able to keep up with the growing demand for PA/PG/PC services. In addition to pressures brought about by the state's growing seriously mentally ill, older and dependent adult populations, and the record level of abuse perpetrated against those populations, county PA/PG/PC programs are under escalating pressure from changes brought about by legislative activity.

Both sweeping direct legislative changes to core PA/PG/PC services, such as the Omnibus Conservator Act of 2006, and amendments to California code sections intended to improve the functionality of other government agencies but which also result in unintended consequences to PA/PG/PC programs, such as recent changes to the Penal Code section 1370 regarding criminal defendants who are found to be non-restorable, have profoundly impacted PA/PG/PC programs through significant increase in numbers of cases referred and increased case complexity. Should California counties be unable to keep up with the demand for currently defined core PA/PG/PC services, the likely result would be increased homelessness, abuse and neglect, including financial theft and exploitation, increase of

non-restorable criminal offenders released directly to the community, as well as increased unmet medical and psychiatric needs for cognitively and psychiatrically impaired adult Californians.

We believe the provision of State funding to annually augment, not supplant, current county spending by 35%, \$68 million, will solidify statewide PA/PG/PC services to currently identified core populations ensuring consistent services throughout the State. Additionally enhanced spending will allow counties to increase staffing so as to reduce caseload sizes; provide more intensive case management enabling more stable long term treatment outcomes; provide more timely emergency services to cognitively and psychiatrically impaired adults and client assets at risk of loss or theft.

For these reasons, Monterey County urges your support of this ongoing funding augmentation.

Please feel free to contact Monterey County's Public Policy advisor, Jennifer Capitolo of Nossaman LLP at jcapitolo@nossaman.com or 916-930-7706, if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

John M. Phillips
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Bill Monning
Senator Anna Caballero
Assemblyman Mark Stone
Assemblyman Robert Rivas
California State Association of Counties