

**MEMORANDUM
COUNTY OF PLACER
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

TO: Michael Paddock, Senior Management Analyst, CEO
FROM: Raymond J. Merz, Director
DATE: August 16, 2001
SUBJECT: **Response to Grand Jury 2000-01 PEACE for Families**

The following is the Department of Health and Human Services response to the Grand Jury Report on PEACE for Families, 2000-01.

Finding 1

There is a great need to assure a safe and healthy environment for individuals seeking safety from violence at home, and requiring emergency shelter. While PEACE for Families is doing a good job of filling this need in Placer County with limited resources, additional financial assistance from the County beyond the \$45,567 they currently receive each year would enable the agency to improve the quality of shelter available, serve more domestic violence victims, and expand the scope of services offered to sheltered women and children.

Recommendation 1

The Grand Jury recommends that Placer County provide additional funding to ensure the continued success and necessary growth of the PEACE for Families emergency shelter. To aid victims of domestic violence, the Grand Jury further recommends County officials look to existing resources, such as designating a portion of the County's tobacco settlement funds for use by the shelter.

Response 1

Placer County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is very supportive of the services provided by PEACE for Families. Additional support for their efforts is desirable, but whether that support is from the tobacco settlement funds or some other sources, is a Board of Supervisors decision.

Finding 2

The Grand Jury observed routine maintenance issues during its inspection of the shelter, including leaky bathroom faucets and exposed electrical outlets.

Recommendation 2

The Grand Jury recommends that the Placer County Facility Services Department provide maintenance, service and repairs to the entire building (interior and exterior) at no cost, to assure a safe and healthy environment for families escaping a violent environment. The Grand Jury further recommends that the Placer County Board of Supervisors approve this as an ongoing expenditure.

Response 2

Placer County Health and Human Services (HHS) encourages Facility Services and the Board of Supervisors to provide whatever support that is feasible. We also strongly support exploring the possibility of a future joint venture between PEACE for Families and HHS's Children's System of Care to develop new facilities.

Finding 3

The Health and Human Services Department did not obtain periodic progress reports and annual financial audits from PEACE for Families as required by the contracts. There was no written documentation to indicate changes were made to the contracts that would have waived these requirements.

Recommendation 3

The Grand Jury recommends that all changes to County contracts be documented, agreed to in writing by all parties, and enforced to ensure the continued viability of the written contract.

Response 3

Placer County Health and Human Services concurs. It should be noted, however, that the County Administration agreed to the same reporting requirements of PEACE for Families major funding sources in order to reduce their administration burden. Our next agreement will officially implement this change.

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Finding 4

The Department of Health and Human Services did not hold PEACE for Families accountable for submission of financial information specifically related to the use of the County's Presley funds (including annual audits and periodic progress reports) prior to renewing their annual contract.

Recommendation 4

The County should ensure that annual independent financial audits are completed and quarterly progress reports submitted as stated in the written contract.

Response 4

Concur. However, in some ways the Grand Jury report provides a dilemma for Health and Human Services. On one hand, Placer County is criticized for not providing enough support for PEACE for Families and, on the other, is criticized for trying to be administratively patient.

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond J. Merz, Director
Placer County
Department of Health and Human Services

RJM/kd