

Board "No Place Like Home" Remarks—Douglas Dunn—June 7, 2016

Honorable Supervisors and Chief Administrative Officer

Though I am a District 3 Mental Health Commissioner, and a Consolidated Planning Advisory Group Family Member, I speak primarily for myself and the NAMI-Contra Costa Board of Directors. I have forwarded each of you and the Clerk of the Board the NAMI-Contra Costa Board of Directors letter about this issue and author Pete Earley's excellent remarks on the desperate need for proper supported housing for the most severely mentally ill among us. In concept, everyone should be in favor of this type of housing. However, with this proposed state budget initiative, the "devil is in the details."

The major "devil in the details" problem is:

- Competitive grants. The Mental Health Services Act specifically gives counties maximum proportional local control of these funds for their behavioral health programs. The competitive grant proposal would deprive counties of \$2 billion dollars of local Mental Health Services Act control of funds plus another \$1.9 billion in bond indebtedness. For Contra Costa County this would amount to \$41,400,000 over 30 years, or nearly \$1,400,000 per year for 30 years, in addition to the nearly equal amount of bond indebtedness over the same period of time.

Contra Costa County Behavioral Health has not fared well in the competitive grant process because it does not have a specialized staff of professional grant writers, like the large counties (San Francisco, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, and Sacramento). This fact has been emphasized at the Consolidated Planning Advisory Committee meeting this past Thursday. It has also been emphasized in my discussions with senior Behavioral Health leadership.

The Behavioral Health Homeless Division just recently released its **2016 Point in Time Report**. While overall county homeless has declined by 28% or 685 persons since 2011, in east county homelessness has increased by 33% or 225 persons in the same period of time. In Antioch, where my wife and I live, there has been a 30% or over 40 person increase, to 164, of unsheltered persons since 2015 alone. Antioch now has the largest proportion of "at risk" and unsheltered homeless persons of any city in this county. Like our loved one, 70 or nearly 50% of the unsheltered homeless in Antioch have extremely severe untreated mental health issues. Antioch desperately needs full, supported housing but will not receive it with this current state budget proposal.

Other major problems are:

- Lack of immediate mandated wraparound housing psychiatric and social rehabilitation services for the seriously mentally ill first as defined in Welfare Institutions Code 5600.3.
- Per a 2004 state Attorney General opinion, a possible unconstitutional state financial obligation.
- Input from the county Mental Health Commission not sought or considered before the Board considered this item.

I strongly urge the Board to reconsider this item or at least consider NAMI-Contra Costa requested amendments to this concept. Thank you for your time and consideration.