

REVIEW OF MARIN COUNTY DETENTION FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The California Penal Code 919(b) mandates that each year the Grand Jury "shall inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the county." Consequently, each year the Marin County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) visits the prisons in Marin County.

San Quentin State Prison

In August 2003, members of the 2003-2004 Grand Jury viewed the condition of the facilities of San Quentin. The Warden, who is the first female warden in the institution's 150+ year history, made an extensive presentation on the prison's history and changes that have occurred in inmate population since she came to San Quentin as a guard 21 years ago. Over the years the prison has evolved from handling the state's most violent prisoners to handling a fairly diverse population including aging lifers, disabled persons, inmates with mental health problems, and persons infected with HIV and/or hepatitis.

San Quentin's Chief Psychiatrist indicated that within the past five-year period, the California State Department of Corrections (CDC) had the following lawsuits filed against it:

- Armstrong vs. CDC - Re: Physical Impairments
- Coleman vs. CDC - Re: Seriously Mentally Ill
- Clarke vs. CDC - Re: Developmental Disability

He gave the group a synopsis of each of the cases and explained how they were used to develop the current CDC policies to evaluate and treat both new and old inmates who have a variety of disabilities.

One of the policies developed has to do with integrating inmates into the system. Every inmate is given a test measuring aptitude and academic achievement to determine appropriate educational or work programs. Currently, one-fourth of the prison's general population is involved in an improvement program of some kind. The ultimate goal is to have the entire prison population participate in such a program.

Inmates are able to study for their high school equivalency examinations and college degrees in an education building. Inmates regularly earn GED's as well as associate degrees.

There is a training shop/factory with printing presses, milling machines, and computer controlled lathes, as well as facilities for teaching carpentry and landscaping/pruning skills.

San Quentin also relies on considerable assistance from non-profit agencies as well as about 3,000 volunteers a month. The volunteers conduct a gospel choir, lead group-therapy sessions, coach sports, instruct classes in art and comparative literature, and teach positive parenting classes.

The Grand Jury noted some computers were available for limited use in the library, although inmates are not allowed Internet access.

The Grand Jury learned that all new inmates from 18 Northern California counties, who are sentenced to the CDC system, are evaluated in San Quentin's Reception Center. All inmates receive an initial health screening consisting of a medical and psychiatric exam/interview and a Tuberculosis test. Additionally, inmates attend an HIV awareness class. Any inmate requiring immediate medical or psychiatric care is escorted to the Neumiller Urgent Care Clinic at San Quentin for further evaluation and treatment.

When all processes and evaluations have been completed, the inmate's central file is presented to the Department's Classification Services Representative (CSR). The CSR reviews and evaluates the inmate's file to determine the most appropriate state institution based upon security requirements, educational needs or job skills, health needs (medical or psychiatric), and safety concerns. The primary factors in determining where an inmate is sent are security and health.

The inmate population as of 8/22/03 was approximately 6,000 (about 3,300 Reception Center inmates, 633 death row inmates, and about 2,075 general population inmates). Because of the high number of death row inmates, the CDC and State Legislature need to decide whether to build a new facility at San Quentin or to transfer death row to another facility.

The Marin County Jail

In August 2003, members of the Grand Jury visited the Marin County Jail to observe its operations. The Grand Jury viewed several of the living units, the security area, and the holding area for intoxicated arrestees. The Marin County Jail houses individuals who have been booked for violating the law or already have been sentenced by the Marin County Courts to serve a jail term (usually one year or less).

This ten-year old facility has 376 beds in six housing units (three general population units for males, one unit for females, one special housing unit for males, and one lockdown unit for administrative and disciplinary segregation). The average daily population in 2002 was 285; total bookings for 2002 were 7,387.

The current annual jail budget is approximately \$12,000,000 of which 86% is for personnel costs. Marin County Health and Human Services provides medical care with registered nurses, nurse practitioners, a contract medical doctor, and a dentist. The annual \$3,000,000 medical budget is in addition to the jail budget. The staff comprises 106 people.

The Grand Jury was briefed on dietary concerns, food preparation, food choices, psychological counseling, and assistance programs. The jail prepares approximately 400,000 meals per year, at a cost of slightly less than \$1.00 per meal. A representative menu includes:

Breakfast: Cereal, toast with margarine and jelly, fruit and/or eggs, and a beverage.

Lunch: Sandwich, soup, fruit, and a beverage.

Dinner: Meat main dish, starch, vegetable, bread, dessert, and a beverage.

Programs provided by the jail include GED preparation, anger management, literacy, parenting, drug and alcohol counseling, spirituality, and career/job placement services.

Overall, the Grand Jury was favorably impressed with this facility.

The Marin County Juvenile Hall

Although the Marin County Juvenile Hall is not part of the public prison system, its operation and condition is of interest to the citizens of Marin County.

In September 2003, several members of the Grand Jury met the Superintendent and the Chief Deputy Probation Officer at the Juvenile Hall located on the northwest border of San Rafael. Juvenile Hall, which is one of four divisions of the Marin County Probation Department, is for children under 18, and is funded by federal, state, and county monies.

After a question and answer period, the Grand Jury viewed the facility. It is a ranch-style building situated near open county land. It has a 40-bed capacity, and currently houses 22 (18 male and 4 female) juveniles. Its remodeled entryway creates added light and space. The high walls display student art with the subject matter being previous inhabitants of the County – The Coast Miwoks.

The Grand Jury learned that offenders housed in the Hall are under the Welfare and Institutions Code, Sections 601 and 602, with Section 602 applying to offenders whose acts would be treated as criminal if the offender were an adult. Juveniles cannot be detained more than 72 hours before sentencing. Once sentenced, the average stay at Juvenile Hall is two to three weeks. Parents pay \$15.00 a day for their child plus other expenses such as court costs.

The facility contains a Juvenile Court area where a Commissioner presides three days a week. It is a well-appointed replica of the courts in the Hall of Justice and accommodates juveniles, legal representatives, families, etc. There is a waiting room where all those who are going to testify gather.

The units for sleeping are individual and sparse with minimum accommodations – each with a window and a heavy steel door locked from the outside. The concrete floors are clean and painted.

There is a large well-lit schoolroom, called the Academy, that can be divided into sections. Single desks fill the room, and the shelves along the walls are overflowing with textbooks. The students, taught by an accredited teacher appointed by the school district, study at their level of education. Computers provide access to a variety of foreign language school programs. Attendance is encouraged, with the alternative being isolation in their sleeping quarters.

During the escorted tour, the Grand Jury met with counselors and staff, and also observed several of the juveniles wearing the standard uniform of dark blue sweat pants and orange windbreaker jackets. For those at risk (suicidal, etc.), there is an "Intensive Supervisors Unit" which allows closer scrutiny.

Juveniles can have visitors three times a week. These visits can last for ½-hour during the week and for one hour on weekends.

This well-managed organized facility provides what appears to be an excellent controlled program for youthful offenders.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, no responses are required to this report.