

MOTION

According to estimates, approximately 30 percent of the homeless individuals in the City of Los Angeles suffer from some form of mental illness. Many barriers to housing and services exist for homeless people with mental health problems. At the same time, mental health problems can be significantly worsened by living on the streets. We will never end homelessness in Los Angeles unless we address the issue of the mental illness among our homeless population.

Laura's Law is a California state law that provides community-based, assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) to a small population of individuals who meet strict legal criteria and who – as a result of their mental illness – are unable to voluntarily access community mental health services. The law is named for Laura Wilcox, who was shot and killed at the age of 19 by a man with untreated severe mental illness. Laura's Law and similar AOT laws across the country have successfully enabled people with severe mental illness to receive the treatment they need in the community. The state law, which passed in 2002, requires each county to implement its own program. In 2014, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved funding for the expansion of Laura's Law. The County will begin implementing the law this month. All of the procedures have been written, staff have been hired, and training is occurring. LAPD will be a "Qualified Requesting Party," which means the department can request an investigation of individuals in the community whom they believe are "unlikely to survive safely in community without supervision."

The appropriate coordinating agency with Los Angeles County is the LAPD's Mental Evaluation Unit. The unit is one of only six law enforcement entities recognized as a national learning site and model for "Specialized Policing Responses: Law Enforcement/Mental Health." The unit was developed more than four decades ago to reduce the potential for violence during police contacts involving people suffering from mental illness, while simultaneously assessing the mental health services available to assist them. Since 1993, as part of its Mental Illness Project, the department's Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) has paired police officers and mental health professionals together to better recognize and handle the mentally ill. In 2005, the LAPD created the Case Assessment Management Program (CAMP) to assist in the intervention, referral, and placement of individuals who require acute mental health evaluation. Both SMART and CAMP work in close partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. As part of this program, LAPD uses a "co-response model." This means that police officers and mental health clinicians are housed out of the same building and respond to calls as a team. Officers and clinicians develop management schemes which employ an array of options from referrals for service, hospitalization and or management of the subject within the jail system.

Additionally, last year, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky created a "Third District Diversion and Alternative Sentencing Program" pilot project, designed as a way to provide chronically homeless and severely mentally ill individuals facing criminal charges with a carefully defined path out of jail and into recovery. The program was intended to provide 50 eligible participants with a variety of wraparound services—including permanent supportive housing and mental health treatment—intended to keep them off the streets, out of jails and emergency rooms, and put them on a path to self-sufficiency.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Police Department prepare a report outlining how the department is engaging with Los Angeles County for training in Laura's Law; how that information will be shared with LAPD personnel in the department's divisions and various community police stations; and how soon LAPD will be able to avail itself of the County program.

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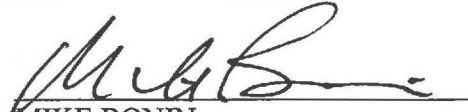


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I FURTHER MOVE that the Police Department report on the current status of its Mental Evaluation Unit, including an overview of its scope of services, and explanation of the current training curriculum and how it compares with nationwide best practices, information on how frequent and widespread the training is, and how many officers are trained and where they are deployed.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Office of the City Attorney be requested to report on the status of the City's involvement with the Los Angeles County Third District Diversion and Alternative Sentencing Program pilot project, whether it has been beneficial, and whether there are opportunities for expanding the program or replicating it for cases handled by City prosecutors.

PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN

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SECONDED BY:

