



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: March 21, 2017

02

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: SERVING SENIORS IN CRISIS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Overview

As Chairwoman Jacob stated in the State of the County address last month, San Diego County needs to better prepare our region for the surge in seniors and families that are overwhelmed by Alzheimer's. Those 65 and older are the fastest-growing age group in our County and the population will roughly double in less than 20 years. More than 64,000 San Diegans have Alzheimer's or other form of dementia. It is our third leading cause of death, the most costly disease and there is no cure. San Diegans with Alzheimer's and other types of dementia are seen by local hospitals roughly 32,000 times a year. They are admitted to the hospital twice as often as people the same age without Alzheimer's. They stay longer, are re-admitted more often and the cost for hospital admissions is almost three times as high. The Alzheimer's epidemic is already putting our region to the test.

Too often, seniors in crisis are taken to a hospital or to jail when diversion might be the best course of action. Today, we're asking the Chief Administrative Officer to work with Alzheimer's San Diego, Sharp Grossmont, the Grossmont Healthcare District, the Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney's Office to develop a pilot project for seniors in crisis, particularly those with Alzheimer's and dementia, and return to the Board of Supervisors within 180 days.

Recommendation(s)

CHAIRWOMAN JACOB AND VICE-CHAIRWOMAN GASPAR

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to work with Alzheimer's San Diego, Sharp Grossmont, the Grossmont Healthcare District, the Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney's office to develop a pilot project for seniors in crisis, particularly those with Alzheimer's and dementia, and return to the Board of Supervisors within 180 days. The pilot project would include, but not be limited to:

- Developing a model that would start with the "call for help" and end with in-home services, with assessment, treatment and assistance to seniors in crisis.

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- Expanding and enhancing our senior response teams.
- Assess and recommend changes to the interaction between seniors in crisis and law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Fiscal Impact

N/A

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

Background

Recently, an incident from last year demonstrates the problem that needs to be addressed. A San Diego woman called law enforcement after her elderly husband with dementia turned verbally and physically aggressive. During the call, he hit her hand with his cane so she would drop the phone. The wife needed help, and law enforcement eventually showed up, but the family was bounced from agency to agency to agency. Continuing the set of unfortunate events, the husband was put in jail, then an emergency room after a jail cell fall. He didn't belong in either one. There was no clear path to steer either individual to the services they needed. This is just one example of the challenges that are facing families, law enforcement and healthcare providers as we try to ensure that seniors, families and caregivers get the right level of assistance, treatment and care.

As Chairwoman Jacob stated in the State of the County address last month, San Diego County needs to better prepare our region for the surge in seniors and families that are overwhelmed by Alzheimer's. Those 65 and older are the fastest-growing age group in our County and the population will roughly double in less than 20 years. More than 64,000 San Diegans have Alzheimer's or other form of dementia. It is our third leading cause of death. San Diegans with Alzheimer's and other types of dementia are seen by local hospitals roughly 32,000 times a year. They are admitted to the hospital twice as often as people the same age without Alzheimer's. They stay longer, are re-admitted more often and the cost for hospital admissions is almost three times as high.

In 2014, the County Board of Supervisors established The Alzheimer's Project, a regional initiative to address the toll of Alzheimer's disease on families, communities and our health care systems. The Alzheimer's Project brought together a group of experts, researchers, local leaders in the fields of health care, caregiving, law enforcement, philanthropist Darlene Shiley, and both County and City government to attack the disease on four fronts: Searching for a cure, setting standards for clinical diagnosis and disease management, caring for patients and caregivers, and expanding public education and awareness. Despite our progress, there is more to do.

Just last week, this Board approved the creation of a dynamic new position within the Health and Human Services Agency that will lead the County's efforts on aging, both locally and regionally, and be heavily involved in designing a new delivery system of resources and services for seniors.

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The person in this new position will serve as our top advocate for the elderly, a high-profile leader to make sure that all the appropriate arms of County government are working together to meet the needs of seniors, especially those with dementia.

Seniors, especially those afflicted with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, require more care and resources. A separate pathway or pipeline would provide services with a specialized level of care to ensure seniors are being taken care of both short term and long term. Beginning with a phone call, this pipeline of services needs to address seniors in crisis from start to finish so they can remain in the home.

East County has the greatest number of residents age 55 years and older living with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia. Fortunately, Sharp Grossmont Hospital’s Behavioral Health Services Unit has been a leader in offering adult and older adult inpatient psychiatric, partial hospital and outpatient services. Along with Sharp Grossmont Hospital, the Grossmont Healthcare District has offered to partner with the County of San Diego to assist in the development and implementation of a pilot project to serve seniors in crisis.

Too often, seniors in crisis are taken to a hospital or to jail when diversion might be the best course of action. Today, we’re asking the Chief Administrative Officer to work with Alzheimer’s San Diego, Sharp Grossmont, the Grossmont Healthcare District, the Sheriff’s Department and the District Attorney’s Office to develop a pilot project for seniors in crisis, particularly those with Alzheimer’s and dementia, and return to the Board of Supervisors within 180 days.

Linkage to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

DIANNE JACOB
Chairwoman, 2nd District

KRISTIN GASPAR
Vice-Chairwoman, 3rd District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Jacob and Supervisor Gaspar

OTHER CONCURRENCES(S): N/A

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Matthew Parr
Name
(619) 531-5522
Phone
matthew.parr@sdcounty.ca.gov
E-mail

Christi Knight
Name
(619) 531-5533
Phone
christi.knight@sdcounty.ca.gov
E-mail