

MEMORANDUM
PLACER COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Human Services Division

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jeffrey S. Brown, M.P.H., M.S.W., Director of Health and Human Services
Edward N. Bonner, Sheriff-Coroner-Marshal
Marshall Hopper, Chief Probation Officer

DATE: October 7, 2014

SUBJECT: Inmate/Probationer Health Care Coverage

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. As provided in Penal Code section 4011.11 and in consultation with the Placer County Sheriff, designate the Placer County Health and Human Services Department, Division of Human Services as an entity which assists Placer County Jail inmates with submitting applications for health insurance affordability programs consistent with federal requirements and Penal Code Section 4011.11.

BACKGROUND:

In 2013, Assembly Bill 720 added Section 4011.11 to the Penal Code to authorize the board of supervisors in each county, in consultation with the county sheriff, to designate an entity to assist county jail inmates to apply for a health insurance affordability programs and the jail administrator, or his designee, to coordinate with the designated entity. Entities can include the county human services or community-based agencies.

The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that inmates upon release have access to continue their physical and behavioral health treatment. With the majority of incarcerated individuals experiencing mental health, substance use/abuse and chronic health issues, immediate access to healthcare upon release has been demonstrated as successful evidence-based practice to reduce recidivism. In 2013, almost 12,500 individuals were booked into county jail with an average daily census of about 660.

Penal Code Section 4011.11 also authorizes the entity to act on behalf of a county jail inmate for the purpose of applying for Medi-Cal eligibility for acute inpatient hospital services. Prior to AB720, the county was responsible for covering the cost of inpatient care. In 2013, 19 county inmates required 125 days of hospitalization.

Finally, Penal Code Section 4011.11 requires county jail inmates who are currently enrolled in the Medi-Cal program shall have their benefits suspended, not terminated, and reactivated upon release if eligible.

In Placer County, HHS Human Services assists residents apply for and determine their eligibility for healthcare coverage including Medi-Cal and Covered CA programs, and determines, suspends and reactivates Medi-Cal coverage. We are recommending your Board designate Human Services to assist county jail inmates apply for health coverage if in need of hospitalization while incarcerated as well as prior to release, and suspend current Medi-Cal eligibility during incarceration, reactivating it upon release.

The Probation Department, as part of its evidence-based transition services, is coordinating with Human Services to enroll not only pre-releasees but current probationers in need of health care coverage, again to ensure access to behavioral and physical health care to improve successful outcomes after incarceration. Designated staff in the Jail's Inmate Services, Probation and Human Services are working closely together to successfully implement the requirements of Penal Code Section 4011.11.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This recommendation is fully funded with Federal and State funds, and no County General Funds are required. Funding for inmate and probationer Medi-Cal application processing is included as part of Medi-Cal administration in the HHS Department's FY 2014-15 Final Budget.

