

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
Response to
El Dorado County 2019-2020 Grand Jury Reports

#19-03: County Credit Cards

**#19-04: Policing Those with Behavioral Health Issues a Challenge for
County Law Enforcement**

#19-03: County Credit Cards

The Grand Jury has requested responses from the Board of Supervisors to Findings 1 and 4 and to Recommendations 1 and 2. The Auditor-Controller was also asked to prepare a response to this report.

FINDINGS

F1. County Credit Card Policy D-2 was last revised in 2003 and is outdated.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

F4. Delays in processing P-Card transactions cause additional work and expense for the County.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The CAO's office, with the cooperation of the Auditor-Controller's office, should revise the County Credit Card policy to better reflect current practices.

Board of Supervisors Response

Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented within six months.

The six-month timeline for implementation was chosen to ensure the revised policy is efficient and with input from all stakeholders. At the minimum, the policy will be updated to reflect current financial reporting and fleet protocols.

R2. The Board of Supervisors should stress to County department heads that P-Card transactions must be processed in a timely fashion.

Board of Supervisors Response

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

The Chief Administrative Office will send written direction to all County department heads that P-Card transactions must be processed in a timely fashion, and will continue to work with the Auditor's Office and individual department heads for those departments who are not processing P-Cards in a timely matter.

#19-04: Policing Those with Behavioral Health Issues a Challenge for County Law Enforcement

The Grand Jury has requested responses from the Board of Supervisors to Finding 11 and Recommendation 8. The El Dorado County Sheriff, City of Placerville, and City of South Lake Tahoe were also asked to prepare a response to this report.

FINDINGS

F11. While PERT is funded only on the West Slope the MHSA Project Team has stated they will continue to evaluate PERT expansion needs.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding.

The Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) Project funds one full time equivalent (FTE) Sheriff Deputy and one FTE Mental Health Clinician. Both of these positions are stationed on the West Slope. However, during the course of operations, the PERT team may respond, and has responded, to other locations in the County. The team may respond elsewhere if authorized to do so by law enforcement protocols (e.g. into the City of Placerville, the City of South Lake Tahoe, and the unincorporated areas of the County including those in the Tahoe Basin).

To address the potential need for additional rapid response to crisis calls in South Lake Tahoe, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)/Behavioral Health Division, instituted a "PERT-lite" program specifically for South Lake Tahoe. HHS Mental Health Clinicians are available to consult with law enforcement, both in the field and from the telephone. Unfortunately, this service is not being utilized in South Lake Tahoe. While Behavioral Health recognizes the daily crisis call volume is low, especially when compared to the West Slope, it is unclear if the low utilization of the PERT-lite service is due only to low volume crisis calls or due to a lack of participation in the program by South Lake Tahoe Police Department.

The MHSA Project Team continues to evaluate PERT expansion needs, as well as evaluating the available funding for program expansion. The Fiscal Year 2020-21 MHSA Plan proposes funding one additional Mental Health Clinician if it is determined to be needed and funding is available. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office would need to direct funding for an additional Deputy (approximately \$195,000), or the Police Department(s) will need to direct funding for Officer(s) (annual cost unknown) to participate.

With only one team (consisting of one Sheriff Deputy and one Mental Health Clinician), the annual cost for this program is approximately \$330,000, which is roughly 25% of the entire annual allocation of the MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) component funding. If MHSA funded two Mental Health Clinicians and two Deputies, it will likely mean that other MHSA PEI projects must be reduced or discontinued. These options will be taken to stakeholders for input during the Community Program Planning Process for the next MHSA Annual Update, which will commence in the Fall of 2020.

Further, the Grand Jury report acknowledges that two teams dedicated to the West Slope would allow for expansion on the days and hours PERT would be available for dispatch to call upon. Therefore, it is likely a full-time PERT team dedicated solely to South Lake Tahoe is not needed. At this time, many PERT calls are handled via telephone due to COVID-19 precautions, which can be done regardless of the slope on which the Mental Health Clinician is located.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R8. The County Health and Human Services Agency should explore the expansion of PERT into both Placerville and South Lake Tahoe Police Departments.

Board of Supervisors Response

Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented within a year.

The Fiscal Year 2020-21 MHSA Plan considers expanding PERT to two teams, as a continuing partnership between El Dorado Sheriff's Office and El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency. The MHSA Project Team will further explore the expansion of PERT into the Placerville and South Lake Tahoe Police Departments during its annual Community Program Planning Process, which starts in the fall of 2020.

Considerations will include, but may not be limited to:

- 1) Stakeholder input as to the need and value of the PERT project and other MHSA-funded projects and proposed MHSA-funded projects;*
- 2) Available MHSA funding;*
- 3) Impact to existing MHSA projects (i.e., will other MHSA projects have to be eliminated or reduced to offer expanded PERT services);*
- 4) MHSA regulations requiring expenditures in specific categories of programs (e.g., children's services).*

Any changes proposed for the PERT project will be identified in the next MHSA Annual Update. The next MHSA Annual Update will publish in draft form in the spring of 2021, and be made available for public comment. The MHSA Annual Update is anticipated to be taken to the Board of Supervisors in June 2021 for final approval.