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Chief Probation Officer

On February 6, 2019, the Board of Supervisors directed the Probation Department to return with a report on the outcome of the transportation of children to the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility, contained in item four of the motion noted from item 19-0170.

Background

Following the BOS motion approving the closure of the existing Juvenile Detention Facility in Placerville, effective June 30, 2019, the transition of youth housed at the Placerville facility to the Tahoe facility began. Youth were transitioned based on the youth's specific needs, court status and appointments, and after a plan of how best to provide each youth with targeted treatment was completed. All youth were transitioned out of the Placerville Juvenile Detention Facility and were housed in the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility as of May 25, 2019.

On March 11, 2020, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization and on March 13, 2020, a national emergency was declared in the United States concerning the COVID-19 outbreak. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and associated national/local emergencies declared following the outbreak, the transportation of youth out of the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility was highly restricted to protect the youth from exposure to and possible contraction of the COVID-19 disease. Further, judicial orders were made at the local and state level to adjust the methods of how and when court cases would be heard with a strong emphasis on use of technology and delayed court timelines.

Information and data utilized in this report was captured between the dates of May 25, 2019, and March 18, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

Transportation

Aside from transportations to the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility for initial booking from the arresting agency, youth are required to be transported to and from the western portion of the county for court, Child Family Team (CFT) meetings for placement youth, Multi-Agency Case Staffing (MACS) meeting for dual status youth, and other evaluations/appointments as scheduled. The majority of transportation from the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility to the western portion of the county pertains to youth attending court appointments in El Dorado County Superior Court departments located in Placerville or Cameron Park.

Over 299 days, a total of 101 transports from the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility to the western slope. Of those, 96 transports were to court appointments, three were transports to CFT/placement, and two were to MACS meetings.

The 96 court related transports totaled 144 youth being transported to court by a total of 126 Deputy Probation Officers. The transports to and from court range in time from three hours to ten hours and thirty minutes in length with an average transport time of four hours and fifty-one minutes per trip. Due to the number of youth being transported, the classification of the youth, or other factors to maintain safety, the either one or two Deputy Probation Officers were required to complete each transport.

Impact

Since the reduction in force related to the closure of the Placerville Juvenile Detention Facility, the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility has been at, near, or below a minimum staffing model due to vacancies, industrial and non-industrial injuries, and other employee leaves. This has resulted in a majority of the transportations requiring the use of overtime to maintain regulation minimums.

In total, to successfully complete the 101 transports, the Probation department had over 742 hours of a Deputy Probation Officer's time to complete the transports, with an average time of five hours and thirty-nine minutes per transport. Cumulatively, deputies traveled over 12,500 miles transporting youth to the western part of the county from the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility.

The youth have experienced a significant impact from the extended travel times as well. In total, youth were out of regular programming and traveling a total of over 790 hours with an average of a youth being out of program for over five and a half hours per transport. This loss of programming has impacted educational progress and individual progress towards individual needs. Further the extended travel time returning to the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility following a "less than favorable" court appearance for a youth has been difficult for the youth.

Upcoming

As of June 11, 2020, in accordance with local and state guidelines related to COVID-19, local judicial guidelines resumed in-person court appearance for select hearings. The modification of guidelines has resulted in the resumption of youth being transported to the western portion of the county for court appointments. This trend is expected to continue and the Tahoe Juvenile Detention Facility is anticipating a return to similar transportation numbers seen prior to the March 18, 2020, adjustment of a transport to the western portion of the county more than once every three days.