

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
June 9, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Office of Coroner
Department of Behavioral Health Services

Subject: Report Back – Explore Options With Department Of Behavioral Health Services
Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator To Provide
Administrative Support

Supervisorial
District: All

Contact: Daniel P. Baker, ASO II, Office of Coroner, 874-9321
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BACKGROUND:

At the May 13, 2009 Budget Workshop, the Board asked that the Coroner explore options with the Department of Behavioral Health Services, Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator to provide administrative support.

DISCUSSION

A review of the 58 California counties revealed many differences in the organizational structures. The Public Administrator function, in most counties, is consolidated with Sheriff's Offices, District Attorney Offices, Treasurer/Tax Collectors, Coroner's Offices or the Public Guardian/Public Conservator. The two most common arrangements found in California are either with the Public Guardian/Public Conservator or the Coroner.

For many decades, Sacramento County utilized a consolidated structure of Coroner/Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator.

In February 1992, the Board adopted Ordinance SCC-0860 creating a sole Office of Coroner and consolidating the Health and Mental Health Director with Public Guardian, Public Conservator and Public Administrator under the newly reorganized Department of Health and Human Services.

In 1998, the organizational structure for the Public Administrator Unit of the Office of Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator reflected 9.0 permanent full-time equivalents (FTEs) and 3.0 paralegal temporary employees. Due to subsequent staffing reductions, increased caseloads and a considerable backlog of cases, the Office of Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator had to review, consolidate and automate many of the direct and clerical support functions to meet the requirements of the Probate and Welfare and Institutions codes. These consolidated functions were applied to all aspects of the three programs and put control measures and efficiencies in place to prevent the backlog of cases from reoccurring. For

Fiscal Year 2009-10, staffing in the Public Administrator Unit of the Office of Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator will be reduced to 4.0 permanent positions and use of a part-time clerical support position, when available.

On January 13, 2009, the Board adopted Ordinance SCC-1408 creating the Department of Behavioral Health Services. That ordinance moved the Office of Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator under the new department, following a review of the caseload and functions, which determined that 85% of all clients served, either suffer from grave disabilities due to their mental illness or suffer from some sort of dementia. Only 15% of the cases assigned were related to the estates of indigent decedents.

RECOMMENDATION

It is strongly recommended that the Office of Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator remain a function of the Department of Behavioral Health Services. Separating the Public Administrator function and reorganizing under the Office of Coroner would require additional staffing as most of the functions are consolidated and any efficiencies in workflow have already been realized.

Respectfully submitted,

GREGORY P. WYATT, Coroner
Office of Coroner

ANN EDWARDS-BUCKLEY, Director
Department of Behavioral Health Services

APPROVED:
TERRY SCHUTTEN
County Executive

By: _____
JAMES W. HUNT, Acting Administrator
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