

February 14, 2024

Christine Lerable, Foreperson
Monterey County Civil Grand Jury
c/o Office of the County Counsel
Attention: Sandra Ontiveros
168 W. Alisal Street, 3rd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Dear Ms. Lerable:

The County of Monterey, Department of Social Services (DSS) received and responded to the 2022-2023 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final report, "Public Guardian, The Final Helping Hand: A Mandate to Care" in June 2023.

DSS would again like to thank The Civil Grand Jury for its thoughtful and thorough review and recommendations as it relates to the Interface between The Public Guardian, a Bureau located in the County of Monterey's Health Department and Adult Protective Services (APS) located with the County of Monterey's Department of Social Services. Specifically, as it relates to Finding 1 (F1) and Recommendation 1 (R1) of this report.

F1 of the Report reads, "Adult Protective Services does not have sufficient access to professional Capacity Determinations for potentially-eligible clients to be referred to the Public Guardian."

DSS Response to Finding 1:

We agree that APS needs a consistent physician or psychologist to provide capacity determinations, particularly in-person and in client homes. Capacity determinations are needed to pursue conservatorships, as a last resort for clients who are no longer able to take care of themselves or arrange for their own care. Finding a licensed professional is critical at this time because the current neuropsychologist will be retiring this year.

R1 of the Report is that Adult and Aging Services engage a licensed professional to provide all necessary Capacity Declarations for Adult Protective Services' clients and/or collaborate with existing professional resources in other County Departments to fill this need by December 31, 2023.

DSS Response to Recommendation 1:

DSS/APS agrees with Recommendation 1. DSS/APS will pursue engaging with and procuring a qualified licensed provider to provide the necessary and complete Capacity Declarations by December 31, 2023.

Updated DSS Response to Recommendation 1:

DSS began the process for procuring a qualified licensed provider last year in July 2023. Since that time, we have obtained quotes from multiple providers. A scope of service has been developed, terms negotiated, and an agreement is being finalized. It is anticipated that the finalized agreement will be in place by the end of March 2024.

Thank you again for your report and recommendations that will help us better serve our vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Lori A. Medina, MSW

Director

County of Monterey

Department of Social Services

cc: Sandra Ontiveros, County Counsel Civil Grand Jury Liaison