



City and County of San Francisco 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

STRENGTHEN OUR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Today, the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury (SFCGJ) released its report identifying opportunities to improve services within the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH). The SFCGJ found issues relating to staffing, including understaffing, inefficient hiring processes, and non-optimal reporting structures all of which contribute to the difficulties facing the department as it attempts to deal with the mental health crisis in our city. In some cases, the issues have gone unaddressed for many years.

On a daily basis San Francisco residents witness a growing population of homeless individuals, recently reported to be over 8,000. It is the task of the SFDPH with a budget of \$2.4 billion and a staff of 7,000 to care for the behavioral health needs for this population. However, the Behavioral Health Services department, within SFDPH, is buried in a myriad of hierarchical reporting structures, has suffered from frequent changes in leadership, and lacks a sufficient staff of intensive case managers. Yet it is still expected to serve 30,000 mentally ill individuals annually with a budget of only \$280 million dollars. Lastly, the SFCGJ found that the website for SFDPH does not provide sufficient information to identify and locate department leaders and other staff. And at the same time, there is a dearth of information at SFDPH sites as to how to locate departments and associated staff.

The Superior Court selects nineteen San Franciscans to serve year-long terms as Civil Grand Jurors. The Jury has the authority to investigate City and County government by reviewing documents and interviewing public officials and private individuals. At the end of its inquiries, the Jury issues reports of its findings and recommendations. City and County agencies identified in the report must respond to these findings and recommendations.

Civil Grand Jury reports may be viewed online at <http://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org/report.html>.

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