



### Response to 2020-2021 Ventura County Grand Jury Report Form (Please See California Penal Code Section 933.05)

Report Title: Mental Health Services and Wellness Centers in Ventura County Schools

Responding Entity: Ventura County Behavioral Health

#### FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered: F-02, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-09, F-10
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered: F-01, F-03  
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings that are disputed;  
include an explanation of the reasons.)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-01, R-02 have been implemented.  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ have not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.  
(Attach a summary indicating the timeframe for implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ require further analysis.  
(Attach an explanation to include: scope and parameters of the analysis or study and timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion with the agency or department head. The timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the report.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.  
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 6/23/2022

Signed: 

Title: Assistant Director

Number of pages attached: 3

**Mental Health Services and Wellness Centers in Ventura County Schools  
Ventura County 2021 – 2022 Grand Jury Final Report  
Responses from Ventura County Behavioral Health**

**FINDINGS:**

- **F-01: Partially Agree**
  - Although the recognition of mental health needs among youth is more readily identified, the statement “widespread, severe and have long-term repercussions” is an overstatement of the prevalence and impact. The current data regarding severity and prevalence rates indicate: 1) Mental health problems can fall in the range of mild to severe and 2) Many factors including the individual youth, their family, and social determinants of health have an impact as to whether or not mental health problems will have long-term repercussions. We disagree that all mental health problems experienced by youth would all fall in the category of severe. Instead, studies show that prevalence of Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) in youth is approximately 10%<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, for youth with any mental disorder, it is estimated that 22.2% of those would be categorized as severe impairment as defined by as defined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)<sup>2</sup>.
- **F-02: Agree**
- **F-03: Partially Agree**
  - Serving youth through a Wellness Center setting serves to reduce access barriers, improve awareness and reduce stigma, support overall resilience, and offers stress reduction and ways to enhance coping skills. Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) agrees these are effective interventions that provide a mental health and wellness focus, and that Wellness Centers are well-suited to providing Tier 1 and some Tier 2 services. For youth with needs requiring a more comprehensive and focused intervention, it will likely require resources in addition to those appropriate for a campus setting. We affirm that that a full-range of mental health care and services may be better suited to off-campus specialized providers to address Tier 3 needs.
- **F-04: Agree**
- **F-05: Agree**
- **F-06: Agree**
- **F-09: Agree**

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<sup>1</sup> Prevalence of Serious Emotional Disturbance Among U.S. Children: A Meta-Analysis. Jan. 2018. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28859585/> Accessed June 23, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Mental Health Jan. 2022. [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#part\\_2632](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#part_2632), Accessed June 23, 2022.

- **F-10: Agree**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **R-01: This recommendation is partially implemented**

- The initial Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) grant of 2019 allowed for the development of the eight high school Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) Wellness Centers through this pilot program VCBH participates in. As of June 17, 2022, the VCBH/Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) team in partnership with VCOE, applied for a third round of grants with the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) for \$11 million. If the grant is awarded, Wellness Centers will be expanded to more Ventura County public high schools. This potential expansion of Wellness Centers in high schools will be dependent on two crucial factors: 1) schools agreeing to host Wellness Centers as VCBH cannot mandate participation in the grant process, and 2) availability of funding. Funding will allow VCOE to expand the Wellness Center model to additional school districts and schools in Ventura County. The additional funds will also support the existing grant by expanding the current service model to fund additional clinicians, hired by the school districts, to support early intervention.
- Upon securing this noted round of grant funding, VCBH will continue to partner with VCOE to onboard the two new school districts (Conejo Valley Unified School District and Oak Park Unified School District) and expand in one existing school district (Ventura Unified School District). Within these three districts, seven new Wellness Centers sites will be developed:

1. Ventura High School (Ventura Unified School District)
2. Foothill Technology High School (Ventura Unified School District)
3. Pacific High School (Ventura Unified School District)
4. Newbury Park High School (Conejo Valley Unified School District)
5. Thousand Oaks High School (Conejo Valley Unified School District)
6. Westlake High School (Conejo Valley Unified School District)
7. Oak Park High School (Oak Park Unified School District)

- **R-02: This recommendation has been partially implemented.**

- Ventura County Behavioral Health is and will continue supporting this recommendation as additional funding opportunities arise. In April 2022, VCBH directed \$2 million MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) dollars to the VCOE Wellness Center expansion. This allocation will support the addition of six middle schools to join the existing VCOE Wellness Center pilot program. Individual school district and school participation are voluntary and cannot be mandated. However, several districts and middle schools have committed to this expansion opportunity. They include:
1. Conejo Valley Unified School District
  2. Fillmore Unified School District

3. Oxnard Unified School District
  4. Ojai Unified School District
  5. Pleasant Valley Unified School District
  6. VCOE- Gateway Community School
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- Ventura County Behavioral Health has also supported VCOE and Gold Coast Health Plan (GCHP) in their collaboration to expand Wellness Centers to school-age youth in the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)-funded Student Behavioral Health Incentive Plan (SBHIP). The SBHIP kick-off launched in May 2022. Utilizing data from the Ventura County Community Health Needs Assessment, Gold Coast Health Plan has identified districts/schools that will include Oxnard Union, Rio Elementary, Fillmore Unified, Santa Paula Unified and Hueneme Elementary. Ventura County Behavioral Health will continue to support VCOE and CGHP in this exciting opportunity for expanded partnerships.