

June 19, 2007

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: General Fund Budget Priorities

Dear Supervisors:

In discussing the budget and budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2007-08, the Human Services Coordinating Council (HSCC) has provided your Board with a series of recommendations and observations on the importance of taking a big picture, long term approach to making budget decisions. It is the HSCC's perspective that maintaining a complement of services that are able to partner to address – or better yet, prevent – challenges is the most fiscally and socially responsible way for the County to improve the livability and vitality of our community.

As you begin examining mandated programs where the Board has some flexibility regarding the level of service provided, the HSCC again reminds you of the importance of human services, and the spill over effect that will result if they are not funded at adequate levels. Human services function to keep our residents healthy, in the workforce, away from crime, and once self-sufficiency is established, to end the cycle of dependence on public assistance and publicly funded services altogether. But to achieve these outcomes, services must be available when clients need them, and delivered in the fashion and quantity that is responsive to clients.

In many cases a stripped down version of a program will not be sufficient to truly impact the client, and thereby serves only to weaken outcomes. Often times, what the client didn't receive in support will be realized through later expenses, such as costly late-stage treatment for a chronic disease, residential care needs, arrests and jail time, or inability to retain a job and growing reliance on government support.

As you consider reductions, the HSCC urges you to keep in mind how the outcomes of one program impact service demand for other programs, and consider what the result of reductions will be in 3, 5, and even 10 years into the future.

Sincerely,



Melinda Avey, Chair

- c. Penelope Clarke, Administrator, Countywide Services Agency
Cindy Turner, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

909 12th Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95814

916.447.7063, ext.337

fax 916.447.7052

hsccl@communitycouncil.org

www.communitycouncil.org

