



MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Keeping the peace since 1850

Tina M. Nieto
Sheriff-Coroner

March 4, 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

RE: Follow-Up Response by Sheriff-Coroner Tina M. Nieto to the 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Report Entitled, "The Monterey County Coroner's Office: A Matter of Life and Death"

Foreperson Lerable,

This letter will serve as my response to your letter dated February 1, 2024, for an update on the following items in my official capacity as the Sheriff-Coroner of Monterey County.

Recommendation 1: Create and adopt a written policy and procedures when the MCSO, or its staff, will recuse itself from an investigation by September 30, 2023.

Status: A Division Operations Manual has been developed for utilization by the Coroner Unit of the Investigations Division. The manual is currently in "Meet and Confer" stage with the bargaining units representing impacted employee groups. In the interim, directives were issued to address recusal for death investigations in which Sheriff's Office personnel were involved.

Recommendation 3: Provide ongoing resources for staff training and continuing education on transcription and emerging technologies in forensic science by March 31, 2024.

Status: Training accountability for the organization was shifted to the Training Unit of the Professional Standards Division of the Sheriff's Office. The training unit continually researches training for staff and provides staff with access to training specific to POST, STC, or job specific duties such as transcription. Emerging technologies are continually evaluated for implementation based on the efficiency they may provide, but at this time a transcription backlog does not exist within the Coroner Unit warranting implementation and change of technology.

Recommendation 5: Evaluate staffing needs and create permanent positions accordingly to minimize reliance on temporary staff by March 31, 2024.

Status: As noted in the initial response this recommendation needed further analysis. Staff was tasked to fill vacant permanent positions in the Coroner Unit and eliminate the use of temporary employees when an offsetting funding stream is eliminated due to the hiring of a permanent employee. The use of temporary personnel has been reduced and work product has been brought current. The Coroner Unit is fully staffed other than one vacant Forensic Autopsy Technician full time employee allocation. In addition, multiple Forensic Autopsy Technician Interns are



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currently being utilized. Internships have proven to be beneficial in the recruitment of permanent employees. An active Forensic Autopsy Technician recruitment is underway which is expected fill our one vacancy. The Sheriff's Office will conduct a staffing and classification analysis of the Coroner Unit in concurrence with the Human Resources Department during Fiscal Year 2024-25 to aid in future decisions. Future implementation of any change to the existing structure of the Coroner Unit will require concurrence of the proposed staffing structure by the Human Resources Department and the Board of Supervisors. In addition, in the event proposed changes to the structure of the Coroner Unit leads to increased operational costs then the increased funding would have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 8: Explore optimizing existing or new contractual relationships with County Purchasing and other County of Monterey departments in areas where services or supply needs overlap by December 31, 2023.

Status: The Sheriff's Officer Contract Purchasing Officer has been directed to continually assess contracts and agreements that may exist within the structure of the County of Monterey that could lead to cost benefits for the Sheriff's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

DocuSigned by:

Tina M. Nieto
Sheriff-Coroner

Cc: Sonia De La Rosa, County Administrative Officer
Nick Chiulos, Assistant County Administrative Officer
County of Monterey Board of Supervisors