

MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES

AUDIT SYNOPSIS

The purpose of the management audit was to examine the operations, management practices and finances of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services (DADS), and to identify opportunities to increase their efficiency, effectiveness and economy. This report includes eight findings, and 26 recommendations, related to intake and referral management, utilization of residential and transitional housing beds, cost efficiency of County versus contractor-operated clinics, performance monitoring of contractors, lack of staff performance evaluations, oversight of the Prevention Division, effectiveness of the Children, Family & Community Services Division (CFCS), and weaknesses of management information. If the County were to implement the report's recommendations, at least \$1.2 million would be saved or generated every year going forward.

KEY FINDINGS

- DADS provides outpatient counseling services to adults through both a County-run clinic and five contract agencies. The Department should contract out all of its adult services, which would save an estimated \$704,000 annually, and should establish and incorporate into contracts quality and cost standards.
- DADS contracts for detoxification and residential treatment services, and specifies that providers hold beds vacant for pending clients, even when they may not arrive for several days. The Department should develop more efficient methods for contracting and require most clients, except for those criminal justice clients who need 72 hours to obtain medications, to report for residential treatment within 24 hours.
- The Department does not measure outcomes and inconsistently uses stipulated performance measures to monitor its 25 contracts. The Department should review and update current performance measures for all contracts to ensure that the measures are meaningful, and require consistent reporting.
- The Youth Division lacks an integrated system of patient care, either does not have or does not have knowledge of its own policies and procedures, and lacks a webpage with all features presented on the Adult Division page. The Department should standardize systems, including defining and tracking reliable performance standards for services, establishing and implementing a complete set of policies and procedures unique to the division that serves youth, and regulating costs paid to providers serving youth.
- The Department's major bargaining units are required by side agreements to the labor agreements to have annual performance appraisals of represented employees. DADS should institute and adhere to a Department-wide policy requiring annual performance reviews for all staff.
- DADS' Gateway Call Center currently employs eight full-time equivalent personnel, about 4.5 of whom are responsible for responding to 50,500 calls per year from adults seeking detox, residential, and outpatient drug treatment services. There are lengthy wait times before a call is either abandoned or handled. Staffing should be improved, and a vendor-supported telephone system installed promptly.
- The Department's Prevention unit inconsistently uses performance measures to monitor contracts and service agreements. The Unit should define and track unique performance standards for all Prevention contractors and grantees and continue to review and revise the Unit processes and procedures.
- Key indicators of staff and contractor productivity and performance are not periodically produced and provided to Department leadership. The Department should continue development of key performance, productivity and activity metrics to be reported to Department management at defined intervals.

A copy of the full report is available at:

<http://www.sccgov.org/managementauditor>