SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS INDEX SHEET

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Item: 29. ACCEPTED AND FILED status report on foster care expenditures; and directed the Chief Probation Officer, Human Resources Agency and Health Services Agency Directors to provide an update on May 20, 2003 regarding Fiscal Year 2002/2003 foster care expenditures and efforts to control these expenditures, as recommended by the Chief Probation Officer and the Health Services Agency and Human Resources Agency Directors

County of Santa Cruz

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

P.O. BOX 1812, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-1812
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JUDITH A. COX
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

April 15,2003

AGENDA: April 29,2003

APPROVED AND FILED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DATE: 4/29/03
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE BOARD
BY _____ DEPUTY

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

SUBJECT: Status Report – Foster Care Expenditures

Dear Members of the Board:

On November 26,2002, The Chief Probation Officer, the Human Resource Agency Director, and the Health Services Agency Director provided your Board with a status report on foster care expenditures over the last five years. At that time, your Board requested monthly updates on foster care expenditures. Reports were submitted to your Board on January 28 and March 18,2003. The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on foster care expenditures through March 31,2003.

Foster Care County Cost Expenditures for the first nine months of FY 2002/03

The following chart displays information regarding the county foster care budget of the three departments for the first nine months of the fiscal year.

Department	Budget: 2003-04	Target Through March : 75% of Budget	Actual $ Expended Through March	% Expended Through March	Over/(Under) Target
HRA	$1,707,709	$1,280,782	$1,154,478	68%	$(126,304)
Probation	$807.798	$605.848	$770,307	95%	$164.459
Mental Health	$21.107	$15.830	$79.560	377%	$63.730
Total	$2,536,614	$1,902,460	$2,004,345	79%	$101.885

As the chart indicates, total County cost expenditures for the first nine months are **79%** of the budgeted target, exceeding the target amount by 4% or $1 **01,885.**

Probation Department Efforts to Control Foster Care Expenditures

Factors influencing the increase in foster care expenditures within the Probation Department budget were outlined in the letters to your Board in previous letters. These factors were centered around dramatic increases in State regulated costs of placement, rather than an increased use of placement. Detailed in those reports were multiple strategies employed by Probation management and the placement unit to reduce the use of AFDC-FC placement.

Since the last report a review of the sex offenders currently in AFDC-FC placement was made by a local psychiatrist who specialized in outpatient sex offender treatment. It was the psychiatrist's opinion that placement is appropriate for the three youth he assessed and that there would be a public safety concern in a less restrictive community setting. The psychiatrist did identify possible reunification plans for the near future (six months) for one of the sex offenders, however, comprehensive and intensive sex offender treatment would need to be located and provided along with intensive probation supervision. Since the last report, two youth have been terminated from Rite of Passage, a high cost placement, which will further reduce the AFDC-FC expenditures.

Below is a chart of AFDC-FC placement utilization for this fiscal year to date. The chart reveals the positive impact that Probation efforts have had on reducing placement utilization. The figures for March expenditures reflect the decrease in utilization and have dropped to the lowest point thus far this fiscal year. The Probation Department will continue its efforts to manage the placement population.

AFDC-FC Probation Youth	July 02	Aug 02	Sept 02	Oct 02	Nov 02	Dec 02	Jan 03	Feb 03	Mar 03
Beginning Count	32	33	41	35	34	33	33	25	25
Placed	9	14	8	8	9	4	2	1	1
Discharged	8	6	14	9	10	4	10	1	2
Ending Count	33	41	35	34	33	33	25	25	24

Future Challenges in Controlling Probation Department AFDC-FC Placements

As you will recall, the Probation Department reported to your Board on October, 22, 2002 on the impact of the loss of the Challenge Grant II (PARK) day treatment centers in north and south county. The Park program served 51 youth in calendar year 2003, all of whom met placement criteria based on structured risk assessment, an interagency placement screening committee decision, as well as a judicial finding. Since the October Board report, the Park Program has continued to provide family

preservation services in South County, serving an average of **8** youth a day who are at risk of placement. The Probation Department is presently maximizing the use of the GROW program to absorb youth displaced by the closing of north PARK. The GROW program caseload size presently exceeds the recommend professional standards for wraparound family preservation service delivery. The south county PARK site will exhaust all funding this fiscal year.

The Probation Department remains concerned that the closing of south county PARK will result in new demands for placement. An interagency steering committee has been working for the past six months, seeking to develop plans to sustain vital family preservation program services to mitigate the loss of the PARK program and avoid an increase in AFDC-FC expenditures.

IT **IS** THEREFORE RECOMMENDED that your Board accept and file this report, and direct the Chief Probation Officer, and the Human Resources Agency and Health Services Directors to provide an update on May 20,2003 regarding FY *20021'2003* foster care expenditures and efforts to control these expenditures.

Sincerely,

JUDITH A. COX	CECILIA ESPINOLA	RAMA KHALSA
Chief Probation Officer	Director, Human Resources Agency	Director, Health Services Agency

RECOMMENDED:

Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

JAC:slt
cc: HRA
HSA
Probation