



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF



May 12, 2025

Sharmaine Moseley, Executive Director
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission
World Trade Center
350 South Figueroa Street, Suite 288
Los Angeles, California 90071

Sent via Electronic Transmission

Dear Ms. Moseley:

**RESPONSE TO CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT'S
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide this response to the Civilian Oversight Commission's (COC) recommendations on enhancing employee wellness and psychological support. We share the COC's commitment to fostering the well-being of our personnel and recognize the importance of these ongoing efforts. We remain dedicated to supporting the health, resilience, and long-term well-being of the Department while balancing operational needs and clinical best practices.

Recommendation 1: Wellness Center Funding

The Department supports the COC's recommendation to examine, through the Chief Executive Office (CEO), the feasibility of funding to develop a dedicated Law

Enforcement Wellness Center, which is in line with Los Angeles County 2024-2030 Strategic Plan North Star 1 and North Star 2. While the full amount has not yet been approved, the Department is making steady progress toward this critical initiative.

211 WEST TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

A Tradition of Service
— Since 1850 —

As part of the Fiscal Year 2025–26 Recommended Budget, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved \$2.5 million in net county cost funding along with seven new and two previously restored positions, including three law enforcement psychologists, three industrial/organizational consultants, one assistant director, one operations assistant II, and one senior secretary III. These additions will expand clinical counseling and consultation services for Department members and their families and support on-site unit consultation and engagement across the Department.

A request for \$5.54 million in tenant improvement funds was deferred to the Supplemental Budget Phase, scheduled for Board consideration in September 2025. The Wellness Center is envisioned as a centralized, multi-functional facility supporting the psychological, spiritual, and physical well-being of law enforcement personnel. Planned services include individual, couples, and family therapy; support groups and crisis intervention services; on-site wellness training and psychoeducation; confidential offices for therapeutic care; and annual wellness check-ins.

This facility will address unmet needs by expanding access to integrated mental health resources and promoting long-term employee wellness and resilience, enabling them to continue to serve the communities at large. The Department remains committed to working with the CEO and Board to bring the wellness center to full realization and welcomes continued dialogue to align funding with service needs.

Recommendation 2: Critical Incident Response Policy

The current policy allows unit commanders to require personnel involved in critical incidents to attend a debriefing with a Department psychologist. The use of "and/or" provides flexibility based on the nature and severity of the incident, ensuring that interventions are tailored to individual and operational needs.

We understand the COC is recommending that unit commanders mandate debriefings with a Department psychologist following any event that has the potential to overwhelm an employee's coping skills. While we support expanding outreach and access to services following critical incidents, a universal mandate may not be clinically or operationally effective. Required participation can lead to guarded engagement, reduce clinical benefit, or discourage future voluntary use of services.

Research in law enforcement psychology underscores the value of internal coping and self-directed resilience. Officers who actively use their own coping resources

tend to experience less burnout, better post-trauma adjustment, and improved performance under stress (Arble, Daugherty, and Arnetz, 2021). Additional studies show that voluntary debriefing, when clinically indicated, yields more effective outcomes than mandated participation (Rose, Bisson, Churchill, and Wessely, 2002; Scott, O'Curry, and Mastroyannopoulou, 2021).

Operational constraints also present challenges. Psychological Services Bureau (PSB) currently has 21 direct-service psychologists who, in the past year, offered over 6,500 clinical appointments and provided 6,200 hours of consultation. With more than 9,000 sworn personnel, many regularly exposed to high-stress events, a blanket mandate would exceed existing capacity and could delay care for those in acute need.

It is also important to reaffirm that PSB does not conduct fitness-for-duty evaluations. These are the responsibility of Los Angeles County Occupational Health. The PSB functions exclusively in a therapeutic and supportive role to preserve clinical neutrality and foster trust.

The Department is actively reviewing the Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 3-10/460.00 – Department Psychologist Response to Critical Incidents, with the goal of strengthening and expanding psychological support following critical incidents. This may include improved guidance for unit commanders, enhanced outreach protocols, and training to help supervisors recognize when clinical intervention is appropriate. We remain committed to increasing service visibility and responsiveness without compromising clinical effectiveness or personnel trust.

Recommendation 3: Public Posting of PSB Data

Thank you for this recommendation. In April 2024, PSB and the Office of Constitutional Policing met virtually with members of the COC to address concerns about the public disclosure of clinically sensitive data. The COC was receptive and recognized the need to preserve confidentiality in the provision of psychological services.

The PSB collects and maintains detailed internal data on all operations. In response to COC requests, we have consistently provided de-identified, aggregate reports for 2022 and 2023. These include monthly and annual metrics across clinical services, crisis response, peer support, field deployments, and other core functions. These reports reflect the full range of PSB activity while safeguarding employee privacy.

We understand the COC recommends that the Department publicly post annual PSB data reports, including consultation and program metrics, and disaggregated suicide and attempt data by race, gender, veteran status, and method. While we support transparency, this recommendation raises significant ethical and legal concerns.

The PSB psychologists are licensed healthcare providers and are subject to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which imposes strict confidentiality standards. Even in aggregate form, publishing suicide or attempt data disaggregated by demographic characteristics in a finite population such as the Department may allow for indirect identification. This could discourage personnel from seeking support, reinforce stigma, and compromise the trust essential to clinical engagement.

Suicide-related data is already reported to the Department of Justice in compliance with established mandates. Public dissemination of such data, particularly in disaggregated form, may generate unintended consequences without providing any tangible benefit to oversight outcomes.

Given these concerns, the Department believes that providing detailed, de-identified aggregate data directly to the COC, as we have done consistently, strikes the appropriate balance between transparency and our legal and ethical responsibilities.

Recommendation 4: The PSB Video Library Collaboration

The PSB maintains a collaborative relationship with the Los Angeles Police Department's Behavioral Science Services and regularly engages in joint training and discussion on best practices in police and public safety psychology. These partnerships have supported program development and enhanced service delivery within both agencies.

The Department agrees that outward-facing content can create opportunities for public dialogue about the psychological demands of law enforcement work. It is important for the community to understand that Department employees, while dedicated to public service, face emotional and physical stressors both on and off duty. Carefully developed content can humanize that experience and improve public understanding.

While current resources to produce such material are limited, we are committed to reviewing what is available and working toward the development of content that is appropriate and meaningful. Any future materials would be selected to ensure

Ms. Moseley

-5-

May 12, 2025

they uphold confidentiality, reflect Department values, and serve as a responsible tool for community engagement.

Should you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me.

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of April L. Tardy.

APRIL L. TARDY
UNDERSHERIFF