

2012 MONTEREY COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

INTERIM FINAL REPORT NO. 6

TRAUMA CARE IN MONTEREY COUNTY

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SUMMARY

The 2010 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury conducted an investigation of the Monterey County Trauma Care System Plan. That Civil Grand Jury recommended that steps be taken toward designation of a Level II or Level III county-based trauma center. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors responded to this recommendation by stating that the County has hired a trauma system consultant who is in the process of updating the 2007 Trauma Plan to include a designation process for either a Level II or Level III trauma center. The 2012 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury inquired into the status of this process.

BACKGROUND

The 2007 Monterey County Trauma Care System Plan found that there is no designated trauma center in Monterey County, and therefore all patients who qualify as major trauma victims are transported to an out-of-county trauma center. The 2007 Trauma Plan thoroughly analyzed the existing trauma care system, but did not entertain the subject of a future designated trauma center in Monterey County. As a result of the above recommendation of the 2010 Civil Grand Jury and the response thereto that a consultant would be hired and a new trauma plan would be formulated, the 2012 Civil Grand Jury decided to investigate to determine whether the plan had been carried out.

A trauma center is a hospital equipped to provide comprehensive emergency medical services to patients suffering traumatic injuries. The different levels refer to the kinds of resources available in the trauma center and the number of patients admitted yearly.

A Level I trauma center provides the highest level of surgical care to trauma patients. Being treated at a Level I trauma center increases a seriously injured patient's chances of survival by an estimated 20 to 25 percent. It has a full range of specialists and equipment available 24 hours a day and admits a minimum required annual volume of severely injured patients. A Level I trauma center is required to have a certain number of surgeons, emergency physicians and anesthesiologists on duty 24 hours a day at the hospital, an education program and preventive and out-reach programs. Key elements include 24-hour in-house coverage by general surgeons and prompt availability of care in varying specialties, such as orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, anesthesiology, emergency medicine, radiology, internal medicine, oral and maxillofacial surgery, and critical care which are needed to adequately respond to and care for various forms of trauma that a patient may suffer. Additionally, a Level I center has a program of research, is a leader in trauma education and injury prevention and is a referral resource for communities in nearby regions.

A Level II trauma center works in collaboration with a Level I center. It provides comprehensive trauma care and supplements the clinical expertise of a Level I institution. It provides 24-hour availability of all essential specialties, personnel, and equipment, but does not necessarily have to have the specialists in the hospital. Many can be called in to see the patients on short notice. Minimum volume requirements may depend on local conditions. These institutions are not required to have an ongoing program of research or a surgical residency program.

A Level III trauma center does not have the full availability of specialists, but does have resources for emergency resuscitation, surgery, and intensive care of most trauma patients. A Level III center has transfer agreements with Level I or Level II trauma centers that provide back-up resources for the care of exceptionally severe injuries.

INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY

Grand Jury members interviewed the Monterey County Emergency Medical Services Agency Director. Further this Grand Jury reviewed the 2007 Trauma Plan, the 2010 Civil Grand Jury report and responses thereto, the 2011 Trauma Plan, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors adoption of the 2011 Trauma Plan and the California Emergency Medical Services approval of that plan.

FACTS RELEVANT TO THE INVESTIGATION

A trauma system consultant was retained and a new Trauma Care System Plan was developed. It was adopted by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors on June 14, 2011 and approved by the California Emergency Medical Services Authority on September 30, 2011.

This revised plan incorporates a design change from no trauma centers in Monterey County to the designation of a Level II trauma center.

The 2011 Trauma Care System Plan outlines the structure and operations of the proposed trauma center. Further it incorporates policies and procedures for system operations that meet minimum regulations standards. Finally, it establishes a time frame for implementation of system changes.

The Monterey County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency will coordinate the implementation of the Level II system and will administer its operation.

Natividad Medical Center (Natividad) and Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System (SVMH) have indicated a desire to be the designated Level II trauma center.

A Trauma System Calendar, a copy of which is attached hereto as Appendix A, was proposed. The timeline allows the two potential designees the opportunity to formulate their individual plans of operation, submit letters of intent, respond to questions and have a final review by an independent panel.

After notification of selection of one of the two above entities and execution of a Memorandum of Understanding, more than one year will be allowed to have the chosen entity put its facility into operation as a Level II trauma center.

It was further proposed that by July 1, 2014 the designated Level II trauma center will have its equipment in place and operational, its dedicated trauma surgeons and other specialties available to meet requirements of the trauma regulations, and all in-hospital personnel fully trained. On that date the Level II trauma system is scheduled to start up.

However, following the requests of Natividad and SVMH, the timeline has been extended, indicating that the trauma system startup is scheduled for January 5, 2015. A copy of the revised calendar is attached hereto as Appendix B.

FINDINGS

F1. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors did retain a trauma system consultant who drafted a new plan, entitled the 2011 Trauma Care System Plan.

F2. Pursuant to this plan Monterey County has designated a Level II trauma center with a timeline for putting the facility into operation.

F3. This time line has been extended approximately six months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The 2013 Civil Grand Jury and the 2014 Civil Grand Jury should consider investigation of the progression of the proposed revision of the Monterey County Trauma Care System from essentially no system to having a Level II trauma center in the County as set forth in the attached Trauma System Calendar to determine whether the time schedule as set forth in the attached Trauma System Calendar (Appendix B) has been met.

R2. There should be no further extensions of the trauma system timeline (Appendix B) and the schedule of events listed therein should be met as written.

R3. If both of the potential designees, Natividad and SVMH, should withdraw their intention to go forward as a Level II trauma center, Monterey County should consider designating a Level III trauma center.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Monterey County Board of Supervisors:

Findings: F1., F2., F3.

Recommendations: R2. and R3.

APPENDIX A

Trauma System Calendar

APPENDIX B

Revised Trauma System Calendar

APPENDIX A

TRAUMA SYSTEM CALENDAR

3.0 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

3.1	Issue RFQ		May 16, 2012
3.2	Pre-Proposal Conference		June 20, 2012
3.3	Submittal of Letter of Intent and Proposal Fee	3:00 p.m., PDT	July 2, 2012
3.4	Deadline for Written Questions	3:00 p.m., PDT	August 6, 2012
3.5	Response to Written Questions		September 7, 2012
3.6	Proposal Submittal Deadline	3:00 p.m., PST	January 16, 2013
3.7	Independent Review Panel Facility Review		February 2013
3.8	Estimated Notification of Selection		March 1, 2013
3.9	Establishment of MOU		April 15, 2013
3.8	Designation		June 5, 2014
3.9	Trauma System Start Up		July 1, 2014

APPENDIX B

TRAUMA SYSTEM CALENDAR

(Revised June 2012)

3.0 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

3.1	Issue RFQ		May 16, 2012
3.2	Pre-Proposal Conference	9:00a.m., PST	January 23, 2013
3.3	Submittal of Letter of Intent and Proposal Fee	3:00 p.m., PST	February 8, 2013
3.4	Deadline for Written Questions	3:00 p.m., PST	March 20, 2013
3.5	Response to Written Questions		March 29, 2013
3.6	Proposal Submittal Deadline	3:00 p.m., PDT	August 16, 2013
3.7	Independent Review Panel Facility Review		September 2013
3.8	Estimated Notification of Selection		October 1, 2013
3.9	Establishment of MOU		November 15, 2013
3.10	Designation		December 5, 2014
3.11	Trauma System Start Up		January 5, 2015