

Good morning Chair Frost and members of the Board. My name is Karen Larsen and I am the Director of Health & Human Services for Yolo County. It is also my privilege to serve as the County's Mental Health Director and Public Guardian, both of which are relevant to the item before you today. While I have served Yolo County for over 20 years, I am a resident of District 1 here in Sacramento and thus very much invested in the support and care of my community.

I come before you today to share my unwavering support of Sacramento implementing Laura's Law or Assisted Outpatient Treatment. This position comes from years of experience with this service in Yolo County and remarkable outcomes.

Congresswoman Thomson, who authored the original legislation in 2002, was also a Yolo County Supervisor, and thus Yolo County was the second County, after Nevada, to implement Laura's Law. We began the project as a pilot in fiscal year 13/14 and fully adopted as an ongoing program after the first fiscal year.

Yolo County has 5 slots for Assisted Outpatient Treatment and can flex up to 8 at any point in time if needed. There were community concerns when Yolo began considering this program and many revolved around civil rights and forced medication. What I have learned since implementation is that the County can build whatever guardrails they feel necessary to protect the rights of their citizens while ensuring their safety.

In Yolo, AOT allows us to provide outreach and engagement services to individuals who are struggling, over an extended period of time, to build trust and rapport and hopefully treatment engagement and recovery. It has also allowed us to be paid for these services via MHSA. The individuals we serve have had multiple incarcerations/hospitalizations, have limited/no insight and are heading towards conservatorship, state hospital or prison, all of which result in losing all rights and freedoms. Not to mention the clients who die by suicide or other means as a result of their illness.

Not only have we seen significant outcomes for those we serve and remarkable client satisfaction, but we have also seen a dramatic decrease in costs to our systems associated with these folks getting the help they so desperately need and deserve. Rarely have we had to take a client through the actual court process, a handful of times over more than 7 years, and the forced medication clause is merely a finding that the judge can make to have an individual evaluated, similar to the 5150 process. We have never had to make this finding.

In terms of outcomes, client satisfaction has exceeded 80% every year and we have seen anywhere from 50-100% reductions every year in Emergency Interventions, Inpatient Psychiatric Hospitalization, Days Incarcerated, and Days Homeless. Most years these numbers are much closer to, or at 100%. The cost savings for 5 clients have ranged from \$150,000 to over \$350,000 annually.

This concludes my comments and now I will invite one of my Mental Health Board members, Antonia Tso-bon-nudies to share her experience with Laura's Law (AOT) in Yolo County. Thank you for your time and consideration.