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To enrich lives through effective and caring service

May 2, 2017

TO: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
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FROM: Cynthia D. Banks, Director 
Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services

SUBJECT: REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD ON BRINGING OUR LOVED ONES HOME (BOLOH) TASK FORCE

Overview

This is to provide your Board with a preliminary report on the information requested in the February 28, 2017 Board Motion to establish the Bringing Our Loved Ones Home Task Force (BOLOH). Your Board directed Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) to launch the BOLOH Task Force, comprised of WDACS, the Chief Executive Office, the Sheriff's Department, Department of Public Social Services, Office of Public Guardian, the Commission on Disabilities, the Los Angeles County Commission on Local Governmental Services, the Commission on Aging, the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee and Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles. The Task Force will explore options for establishing a countywide system and first responder training program, designed to expedite the recovery time of individuals who wander from their families and caregivers, such as individuals with dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or autism.

Background

As the population of the United States continues to age, the number of individuals stricken with memory-related impairments such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease, also continues to rise. The Census Bureau reports that the number of Americans 65 and older is expected to double by 2050, and will comprise more than one-fifth of the nation's population. Similarly, the population of individuals diagnosed with Developmental

Disorders is also escalating at an alarming rate. Autism or Autism Spectrum Disease is one of the fastest growing developmental disorders in the United States. One of the behaviors that memory impaired individuals and children with Autism share, is the tendency to wander. Wandering is defined as an act in which an individual leaves a place of safety (such as a home or facility) and becomes lost and separated from his or her caregivers and loved ones. Wandering in people with dementia or Autism is a common behavior that puts that individual at great risk of harm and possibly death.

According to the Administration for Community Living, there are over 200,000 individuals in Los Angeles who suffer from Alzheimer's or other form of dementia. Furthermore, it is estimated that 60 percent of those with dementia related diseases will wander. Of those wanderers not found within 24 hours, up to half of the incidents will result in serious injury or death.

BOLOH Milestones to Date

Identification of Lead Personnel: WDACS identified Adult Protective Services (APS) as the lead to coordinate and facilitate the BOLOH Task Force. APS was chosen due to its expertise in investigating abuse and neglect situations involving elderly individuals and dependent adults. Over 30% of the APS caseload consists of individuals with cognitive/memory impairments, as well as developmental disabilities. APS also has significant expertise with countywide collaboration, and has established countywide partnerships with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Social Services, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and University of Southern California.

Participation of Additional Departments/Organizations: WDACS identified additional County Departments and other key organizations that could potentially play a significant role in the development of the recommendations to your Board. Additional agencies that we have invited to attend Task Force meetings and provide input include: City of Los Angeles Department of Aging, Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, California Highway Patrol, Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles County Fire Department, Los Angeles Fire Department, Department of Public Health, and Department of Health Services.

BOLOH Inaugural Meeting: On April 6, 2017, WDACS convened the inaugural BOLOH Task Force Meeting at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. Department Heads and Agency Executives of over 20 organizations attended and participated. The Task Force is subject to the Brown Act and all meetings are open to the public. Only those organizations named in the Motion are voting members of the Task Force. However, other organizations and members of the public are invited to attend and present at Task Force meetings.

Supervisor Janice Hahn and WDACS Director Cynthia D. Banks, addressed the attendees and summarized the goals and objectives of the Task Force. Members of the Task Force and other attendees outlined the services that are currently available to those who suffer from memory-related impairment, and emphasized the importance of protecting the autonomy of individuals with these conditions and stressed the importance of supporting caregivers. Additionally, attendees discussed other programs outside of the County that might be replicated and scaled up for Los Angeles County.

BOLOH Website: The BOLOH website was developed and launched on April 25, 2017. The website was designed to keep Task Force members and the public connected to the latest Task Force developments, as well as to provide valuable information and resources to individuals interested in learning more about the Wandering Issue. In addition, a BOLOH email address was developed for questions and comments. Here is a link to the BOLOH website and email address: wdacs.lacounty.gov/bringing-our-loved-ones-home and BOLOH@wdacs.lacounty.gov.

Identification of Current Efforts: WDACS has developed a BOLOH Survey to gather information about existing systems, technological devices and first-responder training programs available within the County and in other jurisdictions. Information such as program costs, numbers served, and other program specifics will be captured. Input and suggestions from Task Force members, other agencies, as well as the public, will be collected and analyzed to assist in identifying strategies for the Task Force and the development of recommendations to your Board. Respondents have the option to complete the survey online or complete it in Microsoft Word format and send it via email to BOLOH@wdacs.lacounty.gov. The survey is available online at: wdacs.lacounty.gov/bringing-our-loved-ones-home.

Academic Research Partnership: WDACS e-released a solicitation seeking to form a partnership with an academic or independent research entity that would take a lead role in the collection of information and analysis of programs, systems, technology and trainings related to Wandering issues. Additionally, the entity would analyze information and data garnered from the BOLOH Survey. Responses to the solicitation are pending and identification of a research partner is anticipated during May 2017.

Next Steps in Implementing BOLOH Task Force

Additional Task Force Meetings: The 2nd BOLOH Task Force Meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2017. As part of this meeting and subsequent meetings, WDACS will request presentations from agencies identified as currently operating programs, systems or training programs that mitigate Wandering among individuals suffering from memory impairments or Autism. Each meeting will work towards the goal of developing recommendations to your Board for establishing a countywide system, and first responder training program designed to expedite the recovery time of individuals who wander from their families and caregivers.

Data/Information Analysis and Development of BOLOH Task Force Recommendations:

Following completion of the BOLOH Survey process, and the compilation of findings from Task Force meetings and additional sources, WDACS will work with the academic partner to evaluate all information and complete recommendations to be approved by the Task Force in areas such as: Networks/System and protocols for Wanderer response and recovery, Technological Devices for Wanderers and Training Programs for First Responders.

An update will be provided to your Board in 60 days. Should you have any questions, please contact me directly, or your staff may contact Lorenza C. Sanchez, Assistant Director, at LSanchez@wdacs.lacounty.gov.

CDB:OS:LCS:rf

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles
Autism Interaction Solutions
California Highway Patrol (CHP)
Chief Executive Office (CEO)
City of Los Angeles Department of Aging
County of Los Angeles Fire Department
Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC)
Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS)
Department of Health Services (DHS)
Department of Mental Health (DMH)
Department of Mental Health, Office of Public Guardian (DMH - OPG)
Department of Public Health (DPH)
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