



NEWS



News Headlines 1/26/2017

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LA County wants paramedics free to take psychiatric patients to mental health centers

Susan Abram, Los Angeles Daily News

Posted: January 25, 2017, 11:09 AM



Supervisor Janice Hahn introduced the county measure to sponsor state legislation that would change a law barring paramedics from taking patients to mental health urgent care and sobering centers. (Photo by Dean Musgrove/Los Angeles Daily News)

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday to sponsor state legislation to change a law that bars paramedics from taking patients to mental health urgent care and sobering centers.

Under the law, which was branded as “outdated” by one county official, paramedics are required to take patients with psychiatric needs only to hospital emergency departments or 9-1-1 receiving units.

Supervisor Janice Hahn, who introduced the motion to support the legislation, said the irony was that police officers and sheriff’s deputies — but not paramedics — can take those who are intoxicated or experiencing a mental health episode to centers that can help them.

“This practice adds to our overcrowding in our emergency room,” Hahn said of the state law. “I think it’s time to alter that law.”

Los Angeles County operates five urgent mental health care centers and one recently opened sobering center in Skid Row.

“We’ve hit upon an outdated provision,” Department of Health Services Director Mitchell Katz told the board. “Sobering centers and mental health urgent care centers are more humane places to bring people.”

They also are a less expensive and more effective way to care for patients, said Dr. Marc Eckstein, medical director of the Los Angeles City Fire Department. In 2015, the LAFD received 11,500 emergency psychiatric calls. The figure represents a steady increase, which Eckstein relates to several factors: an increase in the county’s homeless population and decrease in the number of available psychiatric beds and mental health services.

“We certainly support the motion by the Board of Supervisors,” Eckstein said. He said the Fire Department has just completed a pilot program that allows a nurse practitioner to accompany paramedics so that a patient with mental health needs can go to an urgent care center. In just a few months, more than 70 patients were taken to mental health urgent care facilities and received immediate help, Eckstein said.

The department is working to expand the program, he said. As it is now, a paramedic team will transport a patient with mental health needs to a hospital, and that patient may wait up to five days in that emergency department until a psychiatric bed opens up in one of the county hospitals.

“Obviously, the big caveat is the state is not comfortable and the safety code doesn’t permit to transmit anyone anywhere except for a 9-1-1 receiving department,” Eckstein said. “It’s costing the taxpayers millions of dollars.”

<http://www.dailynews.com/health/20170125/la-county-wants-paramedics-free-to-take-psychiatric-patients-to-mental-health-centers>

Rainy Season Calls for Sandbags Available in Grand Terrace

Shelby Horton, Grand Terrace City News

Posted: January 25, 2017, 1:23 PM

California has been experiencing heavy rain for the past couple of week which put in effect flood warnings across different cities. Local governments want their citizens to take precautions in protecting their homes from flooding due to the intense rain that has been received, including the City of Grand Terrace.

Grand Terrace is issuing sandbags and sand to citizens at designated locations. Sandbags can be used to act as a barrier to divert moving water around, instead of the water seeping into building and homes. Sandbags do not guarantee a water-seal like affect but is usually satisfactory for keep homes and buildings dry.

Make sure to clear the area you are planning to place the sandbags by removing debris such as large sticks and rocks since these may cause gaps in the structure. Sandbags are encouraged to be built in either a pyramid or ring formation to have the most effective water blocking capability. Sandbags are not reusable, since over a period of time they will deteriorate. People are recommended to follow the guidelines outlined by their local environment protection department of how to dispose of their used sandbags. Since floodwater could be potentially contaminated with other chemicals and wastes, proper handling of used sandbags that may have had contact with those things is important for environment safety reasons.

In Grand Terrace, sandbags can be picked up at the **San Bernardino County Fire Station No. 23** located at 22582 City Center Court, Grand Terrace, or at Grand Terrace City Public Works Yard, located at 22795 Barton Rd, Grand Terrace.

However, if your property has already suffered from flooding sandbags may not help. It is recommend that a person should concentrate on protecting themselves, their personal belongings and finding other methods to seal entry points that water can get through such as silicone sealant.

<http://grandterrace.citynewsgroup.com/articles/ac1694c1e9340209b2562495934e6861>

Upland residents to get hit with tax increases

Letters to the Editor, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Re “City of Upland adapting to new reality” (Debbie Stone, Jan. 8):

The city of Upland has approved annexation into the **San Bernardino County Fire Protection District**. This is “a move that will improve the city’s bottom line by more than \$50 million over the next 10 years.”

This may be true but the Upland City Council doesn’t mention that the “bottom line” is being paid by Upland citizens by an increase in property tax.

The mayor further states, “We are looking at other options for restoring long-term financial stability.

“Our traditional approach of simply cutting expenses has left us as much as \$12 million a year below where we need to be in order to provide essential services such as public safety and street maintenance.”

This is saying for the citizens of Upland to expect additional taxes in one form or another, like the new increase in property tax. It is a shame that Upland does not have former Mayor Ray Musser, former Councilman Glenn Bozar and Councilman-hopeful Ricky Felix to control the council’s readiness to solve financial problems by voting for increases in taxes.

At the least, the council should allow the citizens of Upland the right to vote on these tax increases. Upland has a council ready to increase the tax burden for its citizens.

— *Dionicio Gonzales, Upland*

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/opinion/20170125/upland-residents-to-get-hit-with-tax-increases-letters>