



# AGENDA MATERIAL

## PIMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

DATE 3-1-22

ITEM NO. RA12

**Chris Nanos, Sheriff**

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February 28, 2022

Honorable Chair Sharon Bronson and  
Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors  
33 N. Stone Avenue, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701

***RE: Pima County Sheriff's Department Response to Fentanyl Misuse***

Dear Honorable Chair and Members Pima County Board of Supervisors:

As communicated in the February 17, 2022, memorandum from Acting Pima County Administrator, Jan Leshner, opioid related deaths continue to rise in Pima County; a national issue with Arizona as a geographic gateway entry for narcotics. The Pima County Sheriff's Department supports all County efforts against fentanyl use and deaths at the community level. Specific to the Pima County Adult Detention Complex (PCADC), I have advocated and supported a shared, systematic approach that recognizes our custodial responsibilities in conjunction with the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) and Naphcare (current contracted medical provider servicing inmate medical needs). Working in partnership allows for more robust response efforts as resources and practices work in tandem to eliminate overdoses and deaths of inmates within the PCADC. This is achieved through enhanced custodial interdiction of fentanyl and narcotics smuggled into the facility. Medical screening of inmates prior to booking, adequate and responsive medical care for inmates housed at the PCADC, and consistent, thorough evaluation of all deaths for whatever cause as zero deaths is the standard I strive to maintain.

It should be recognized that individuals entering the PCADC do not reflect the general population relating to quality of health. Law enforcement in general interacts with individuals abusing narcotics, have marginal physical and psychological health issues, and live damaging lifestyle environments. This is a social problem that requires macro level solutions, and a community response. The PCADC is often the last stop for these individuals as societal resources are limited or inadequate. Over my thirty (30) plus years of law enforcement experience, the inmate population has drastically changed as individuals coping with narcotics abuse and mental health issues are now dominant in numbers and reflect an exploding percentage of the population within the facility. In my personal and professional opinion, I do not believe that law enforcement agencies are the appropriate public service to address these issues. However, I do recognize a responsibility and role to influence and become part of the solution.

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As a compliment to the Pima County community and PCHD medical health responses, I have directed a focus in several areas to meet the fentanyl challenges. These areas include a layered approach that improves custodial interdiction and security (including equipment investments), corrections officer training, procedural interventions, and partnership process protocols.

### ***Custodial Interdiction and Security***

The PCADC has upgraded technology and equipment to increase interdiction of narcotics entering the facility. Inmates consistently adapt to security measures to smuggle narcotics as the economic benefit and demand dynamics are lucrative to risk of interdiction. Inmates go to great extremes, as you can imagine, to smuggle narcotics into the jail. Our department has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to upgrade body scanner technology and equipment technology to increase security.

- Body scanner upgrade with additional imager and new software update to better see ingested and secreted contraband.
- Purchase and training of two (2) drug canines for the detection of fentanyl.
- NARCAN issued to all housing pods.
- In process of purchasing an ION drug detection machine.

In January of 2021, research into enhanced security measures determined that software updates with upgraded algorithms existed to detect anomalies for the intake body scanner. I directed that purchase of this new software and expanded the scanner capacity with purchase of an additional imager and updated software. Presently, our department is working with the manufacturer to increase detection accuracy as this equipment has limitations for use in detecting narcotics.

The jail canines are capable of detecting fentanyl and represent the only two canines in Southern Arizona with this capability. Investigative efforts through our internal Security Services Unit are diligent in monitoring for actionable intelligence. If intelligence is developed, corrections officers are directed to complete a shakedown of the housing units in play with canine support as a deterrent.

NARCAN has been issued in all housing units and corrections officers are trained on the administration of NARCAN. This has resulted in multiple life-saving outcomes.

Purchase of an ION detection machine or additional drug detector technology provides a layered approach to detecting narcotics entering the facility.

### ***Corrections Officer Training and Procedural Interventions***

- Policy changes to "dress out" all arrestees.
- Increased shakedowns.
- All deaths criminally investigated.
- Adopted "postcard" only mail and scanning.

All inmates entering the facility are clothed with PCADC issued inmate uniform to limit narcotic smuggling. A gap between booking and initial appearances was identified, and we intervened to restrict individuals from entering the facility to utilize hidden pockets and efforts to conceal narcotics and contraband. Corrections officers are initiating shakedowns to locate narcotics and deter inmates from trafficking drugs within the housing units. Investigative efforts through our internal Security Services Unit are also diligent in monitoring for actionable intelligence.

Mail entering the PCADC is now received as a postcard per newly adopted policy. It is then scanned as an electronic message to inmates utilizing tablet technologies for communicating with their loved ones.

### ***Partnership Process Protocols***

- The PCHD and Naphcare obtaining DEA licensing to supply and dose methadone.
- Support of enhanced Medication Assistance Treatment (MAT) services under Naphcare guidance.
- Increase staffing for 24/7 detox nursing services.
- Training to achieve more consistent and accurate detoxification scoring when prescreening prior to booking.
- Identifying office space to support medical services.

Our PCADC staff works in conjunction with the PCHD and Naphcare as a partnership and shared challenge to address the fentanyl issue.

In closing, as Sheriff, I would like to reiterate that I am committed to reducing the risks of death within the PCADC. As a standard, no deaths are acceptable. We are implementing a layered approach to combat against creative and adapting smuggling techniques. I am investing in any technology or equipment that can improve detection and training corrections officers to better identify individuals in distress for appropriate and swift

medical intervention. I am passionately advocating for the justice system to reduce nonsensical sentencing practices, improving efforts to reduce the jail population for non-violent offenders and striving to influence County and community stakeholders to get incarcerated individuals the appropriate services. The PCADC is not a mental health facility. It is not a detoxification clinic. Services for individuals with narcotic and mental health distress is limited as compared to a hospital or behavioral health treatment facility. The PCADC is not a convenient last stop for other local and state entities to pass along their problems. The system must work for these individuals.

### ***Continued COVID-19 Response***

COVID-19 has had an adverse impact on operations at the PCADC. Staffing levels are at critical lows, the inmate population continues to rise despite efforts to reduce the numbers, and COVID-19 protocols restrict efficient operations as it introduces housing space constraints, however, understandably. The department strives to comply with all COVID-19 protocols under the guidance of Dr. Garcia and the PCHD. Our department has compiled with the following:

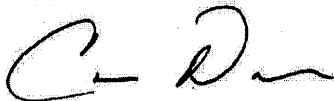
- Mandated COVID-19 vaccination of all Corrections personnel and parties entering the facility.
- Inmates and personnel mask enforcement.
- Quarantine protocols for all inmates entering the facility and testing positive for COVID-19.
- Rapid testing of inmates per PCHD protocols.
- Daily tracking and reporting of COVID-19 positive individuals to PCHD.
- Focused environmental services cleaning and sanitation.
- Infrastructure investments in video court capability.

In addition to these demanding efforts, corrections custodians, assigned to the Environmental Services Section, continue to carry out environmental services in support of jail operations. These professionals clean, sanitize, disinfect any and all biohazards, and COVID-19 sources of contamination, consistently exposed to situational hazards in strict accordance with security rules and procedures, representative as "true heroes" through this pandemic.

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Our department has significantly invested in expanding video court within the PCADC. Our video court (1D section) has been customized with infrastructure improvements and technology to support video court. The COVID-19 response demanded that we work smarter, limiting social distancing. It is my hope that video technology becomes the new normal as this functionality greatly reduces labor-intensive inmate transports for 50% of regular hearings or business with the courts. It also, restricts the introduction of contraband (i.e. fentanyl) into the facility as inmate interactions outside the facility are reduced. County efforts to reduce the jail population, despite meaningful intent, have, in my opinion, failed as inmate population continues to rise. I have advocated for the courts to engage as their role is the difference. We welcome the courts to use video court technologies and support all efforts of other judicial partners to reduce the PCADC jail population.

Respectfully,



Chris Nanos  
Sheriff of Pima County

CN/RK:cgv

c: Jan Leshner, Acting Pima County Administrator  
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