



California Association of Psychiatric Technicians

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
2013 JAN 22 A 10:47

January 17, 2013

The Honorable Vito Chiesa
Stanislaus County Board Chair
1010 10th St., #6500
Modesto, CA 95354

RE: SUPPORT OF "LAURA'S LAW" MENTAL-HEALTH PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Dear Chair Chiesa,

As state president of our 14,000-member professional organization, I am again writing to encourage and respectfully request your county's implementation of "Laura's Law."

"Laura's Law" is a California state law allowing counties to implement court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment programs for those with serious mental illnesses. To qualify for the program, the person must have a serious mental illness plus a recent history of psychiatric hospitalizations, jailings or acts, threats or attempts of serious violent behavior towards himself/herself or others. The law is named after Laura Wilcox, a young woman from Nevada County who, along with two others, was killed by a man with serious mental illness who had refused treatment.

As state-licensed, -trained and -regulated mental-health and developmental-services nursing professionals, we Psychiatric Technicians are very familiar with the urgent and all-too-often unmet needs of Californians with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities, as well as the ongoing efforts of families to get timely care for their loved ones facing crises. Laura's Law would provide your county with a tool to help your mentally ill constituents who are facing suffering at best, and danger – and even death – at worst.

We know counties' budgets, as always, are tight, but with ongoing preventable tragedies throughout our state and our nation, we can no longer afford to be penny-wise and pound-foolish. In fact, Laura's Law has been shown to save money: Nevada County, where Ms. Wilcox was killed, has implemented an assisted outpatient treatment program that has saved more than \$200,000 and has received high honors from both the California State Association of Counties and the National Association of Counties.

We Psychiatric Technicians take a pledge to uphold the integrity, dignity and rights of those in our care. Laura's Law would help Californians in need by upholding their rights while allowing them to get the safe care they need to move toward health and healing.

We sincerely hope that 2013 will be the year that all California counties implement Laura's Law. Please contact me at (909) 595-1085 if I may be of any assistance on this issue.

Sincerely,

Tony Myers
CAPT State President