



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Behavioral Health Unit Underway at Jail Dedicated to Support Mentally Ill Inmates

Sheriff's Advisory Foundation working to secure private funding for new unit with more than half already committed

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA – The [Sheriff's Advisory Foundation](#) (SAF) announced today that it is supporting plans to move forward for a new Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) at the San Luis Obispo County Jail. The BHU will provide behavioral therapy services and housing for inmates suffering from mental illness.

Sheriff Parkinson met with the SAF to discuss the idea of private funding for the BHU. Parkinson has stated numerous times that this is an issue that affects the community as a whole, so it is natural to make this a community-funded facility. The SAF agreed to support the project and has identified it as one of its major projects for 2018.

The SAF will take an active role in raising private funds for the BHU to support the County in expediting its opening, allowing the unit to be operational sooner than it would going through the County government procurement process. The SAF has provided a lead gift of \$50,000 and to date, approximately \$272,000 has been committed toward the estimated \$500,000 project budget. Target date for the facility to be online is before the end of the year.

French Hospital Medical Center (FHMC) has committed \$50,000 towards the BHU as a lead sponsor. “French Hospital is supporting this much-needed project as part of the solution to provide better mental health services to our community as a whole,” said President/CEO Alan Iftiniuk. “Currently the local hospitals are tasked with providing medical services to inmates that can sometimes act in a way that is a danger to themselves or others, including our medical staff. While FHMC’s mission is dedicated to providing care to all residents, the BHU will be better equipped to provide this care in a more suitable environment.”

The SAF is accepting donations towards the facility at www.safslo.org by filling out the Donation/Pledge Form on the “Support Us” page. Tax deductible donations can be made through the SAF, which is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

According to Sheriff Parkinson, “The needs of the mentally ill are not being met in our county jail due to a lack of facilities, staff and funding. The Behavioral Health Unit will enable us to serve all inmates with dignity.”

Some of the Behavioral Therapy Services that will be available at the BHU:

- Daily group and individual treatment up to eight hours per day
- Dormitory style housing
- Therapeutic environment and treatment programs such as Legal Education, Coping Skills, Substance Abuse and Communication Skills
- Quicker treatment and faster adjudication of underlying charges

For more information on Donations in support of the BHU, contact the Sheriff’s Advisory Foundation at (805) 709-6591 or safslo@yahoo.com.

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About the Sheriff’s Advisory Foundation:

The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Advisory Foundation is a non-profit, public benefit corporation formed to provide funding and additional support to law enforcement in San Luis Obispo County. The Sheriff's Advisory Foundation started in 1988 with 22 members and has grown to more than 200 active members.