

County of Santa Clara

Office of the Sheriff

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M E M O R A N D U M

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Sheriff

TO: Laurie Smith, Sheriff

FROM: Captain David Sepulveda
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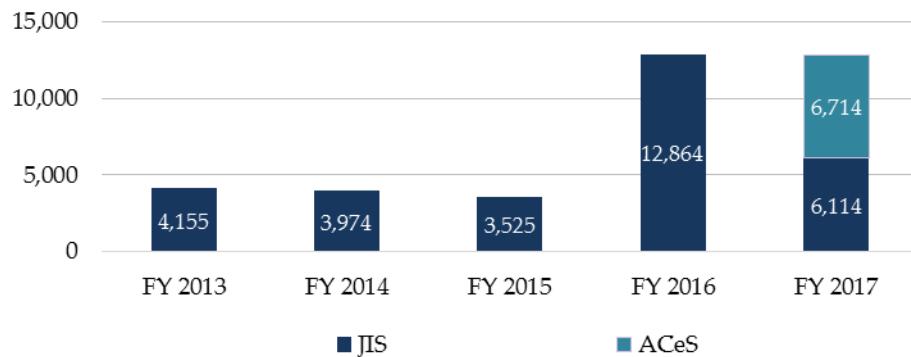
DATE: April 13, 2018

SUBJECT: Grievance and Appeals Unit Bi-Annual Statistics and Audit Report

The statistics on the following pages are based on data gathered from the new ACeS Inmate Grievance and Appeal Tracking Database. Since the system was implemented on June 5, 2017, there is currently insufficient data to establish long term trends. However, the data does provide a baseline for measurement and has begun to highlight areas of opportunity for improvement in the jails. During the time the ACeS system has been in use, several modifications have been made in an effort to improve the quality and usefulness of the grievance data it collects. Statistical analysis begins on the next page, with a comparison of grievance volume from year to year, including the grievances submitted under the improved grievance process which are now tracked using the new ACeS system. Following that is a statistical summary of grievance data collected since the implementation of ACeS.

Figure 1

Annual Inmate Grievance Submissions
Five Year Statistics
Fiscal Years 2013 through 2017

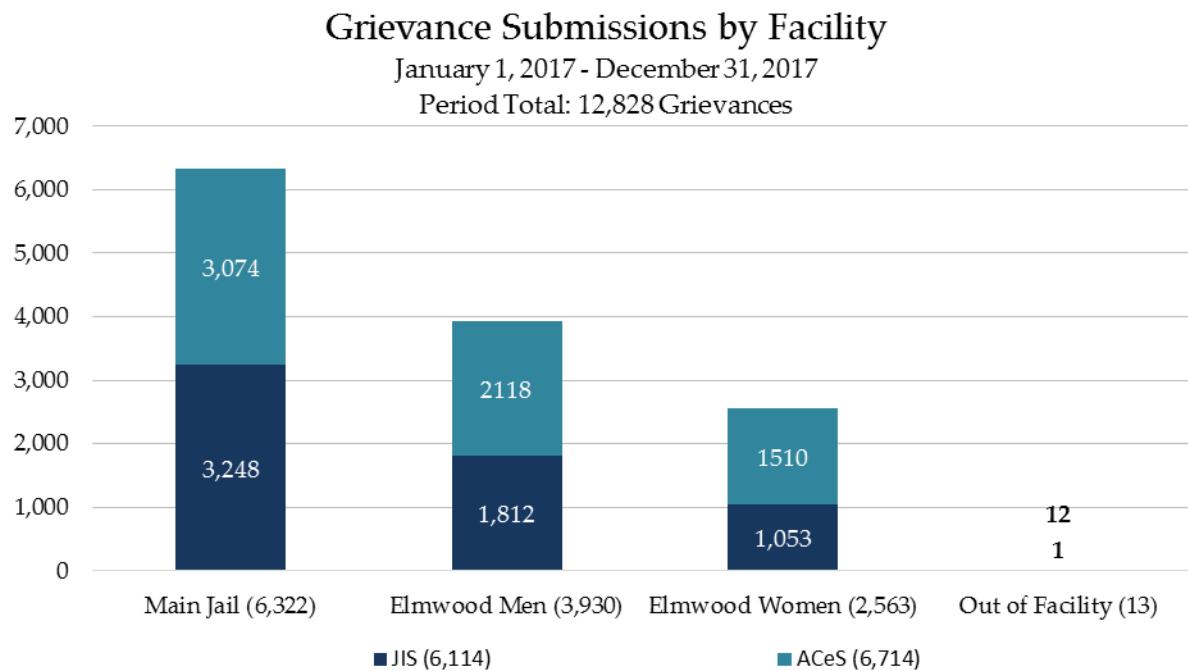


Historical Grievance Volume Compared to Current

The total number of Inmate Grievances submitted dramatically increased in 2016 from previous years. Based upon anecdotal information, staff believe the increase is the result of inmates becoming more confident about submitting grievances, due partly to the implementation of anonymous grievance lockboxes. Since the implementation of the new process the Grievance Unit has not received complaints from inmates that grievances are being lost.

In the chart above, the grievance count total for calendar year 2017 is split between grievances submitted and tracked following old versus new processes, with the 6,714 grievances collected using the new system ACeS highlighted.

Figure 2



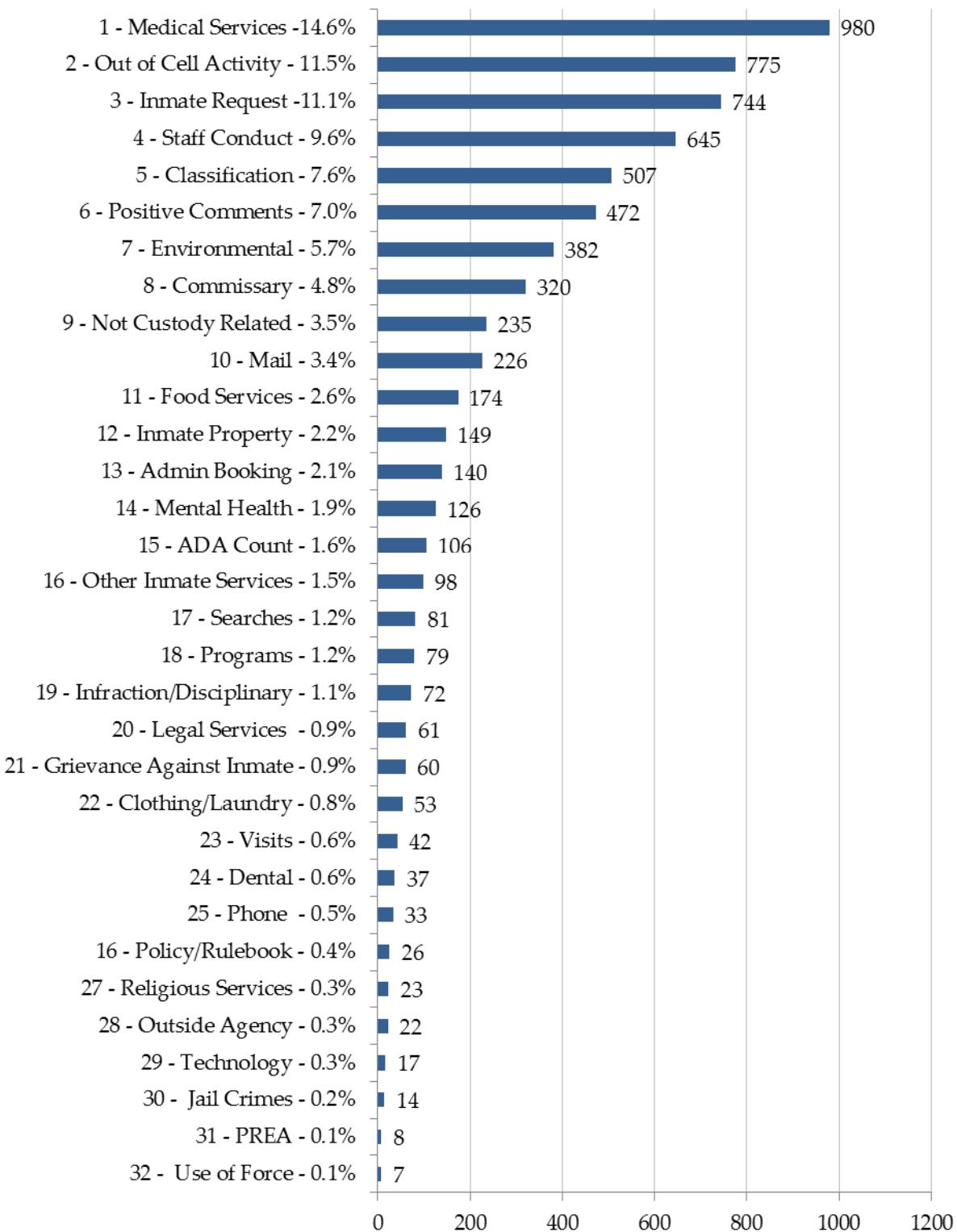
Inmate Grievance Volume By Facility

Of the total 12,828 grievances submitted in 2017, 49.2% originated in the Main Jail Complex. The chart above describes the distribution of grievances between each of the jail facilities, and further split between those submitted to the old process in the Jail Information System (JIS) as compared with the number submitted and tracked in ACeS.

It should be noted that although a grievance is submitted from a specific facility location that does not indicate that the grievance is about that facility or its staff. An inmate who was transferred from one facility can still submit a grievance about an incident that occurred at another facility. Facilities also receive grievances about other support units or services provided by other entities. The newly enhanced grievance categories now allow us to more accurately understand what person or entity is actually responsible for generating the grievance issue. Therefore, the location from which the grievance was submitted will be more significant in future reports. The remainder of this report is focused only on grievance data collected since implementation of the ACeS system in June, 2017.

Figure 3

Grievance Totals By Category
June 5, 2017 through December 31, 2017
6,714 Grievances



Inmate Grievance Volume By Category

Please refer to Figure 3 on the previous page.

Of the 6,714 grievances submitted during the first six months following the implementation of the ACeS system, 5,460, more than 80% of the total, are represented in 11 categories. Within these top eleven grievance categories, two categories are not complaint related. Specifically, the "Inmate Request" category, where an inmate requests information or services, and the "Positive Comment" category where an inmate provides positive feedback or remarks about the facility, staff, programs, etc., are included in these statistics, but are not grievances. These two categories total 1,216 or more than 18% of the total.

It is important to highlight that by excluding the two non-grievance categories mentioned above, the remaining top five categories total 3,289 grievances, or nearly 60% of the remaining total of 5,498 grievances. These categories are:

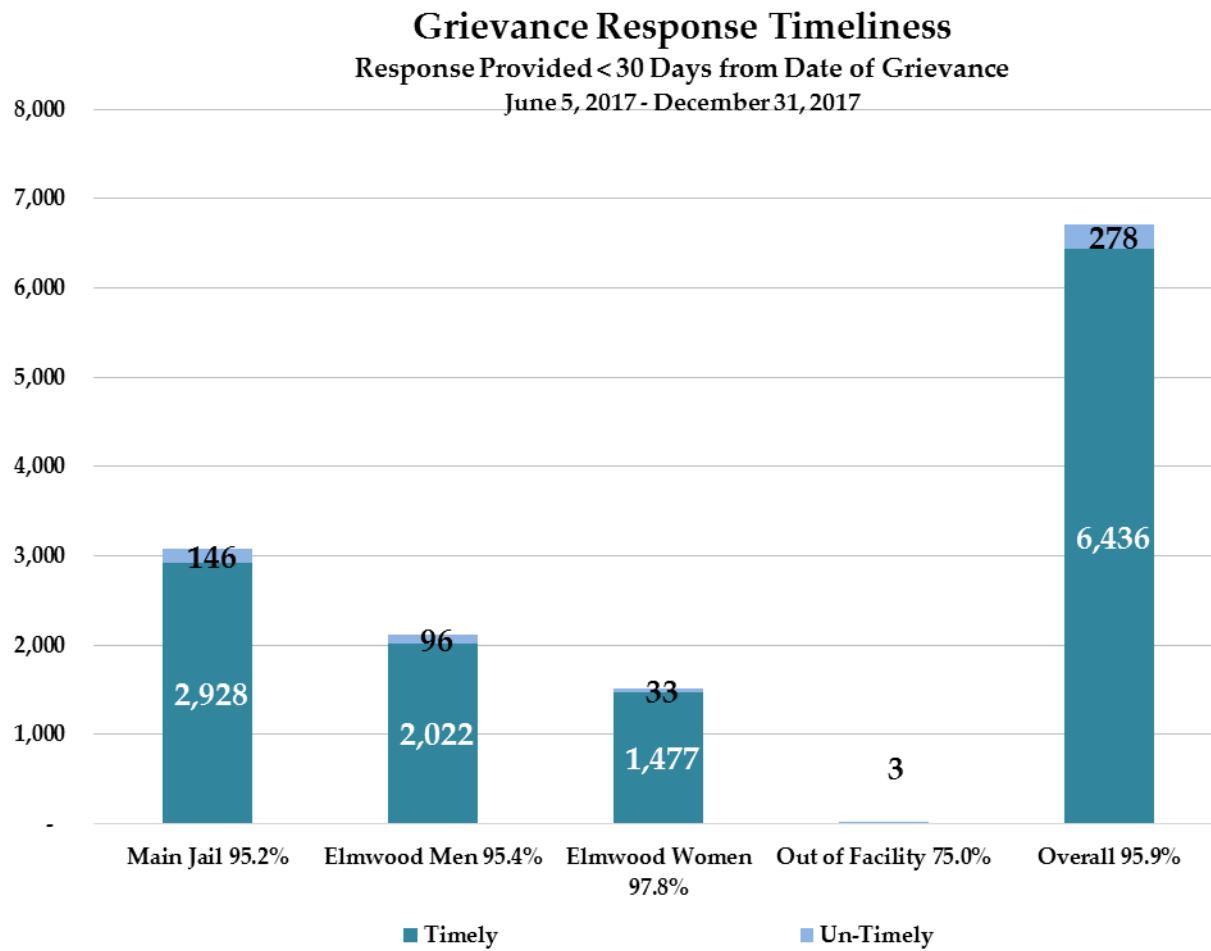
Rank	Category	Category Total
1	Medical Services	980
2	Out of Cell Activity	775
3	Staff Conduct	645
4	Classification	507
5	Environmental	382

Medical Services, with a total of 980 grievances, or 14.6% of the total, was clearly the most frequent category of grievance submitted during this period.

Also important to highlight in this chart is the single lowest number of grievances submitted in a category. The "Use of Force" category had only 7 grievances submitted, or 0.1% of all grievances submitted.

In addition to ongoing efforts to address the issues which drive the filing of inmate grievances, the Custody Bureau will also work to improve overall inmate understanding of jail processes, resources, and programs which are available to them, in an attempt to more appropriately route requests and other communications outside, the ACeS grievance system.

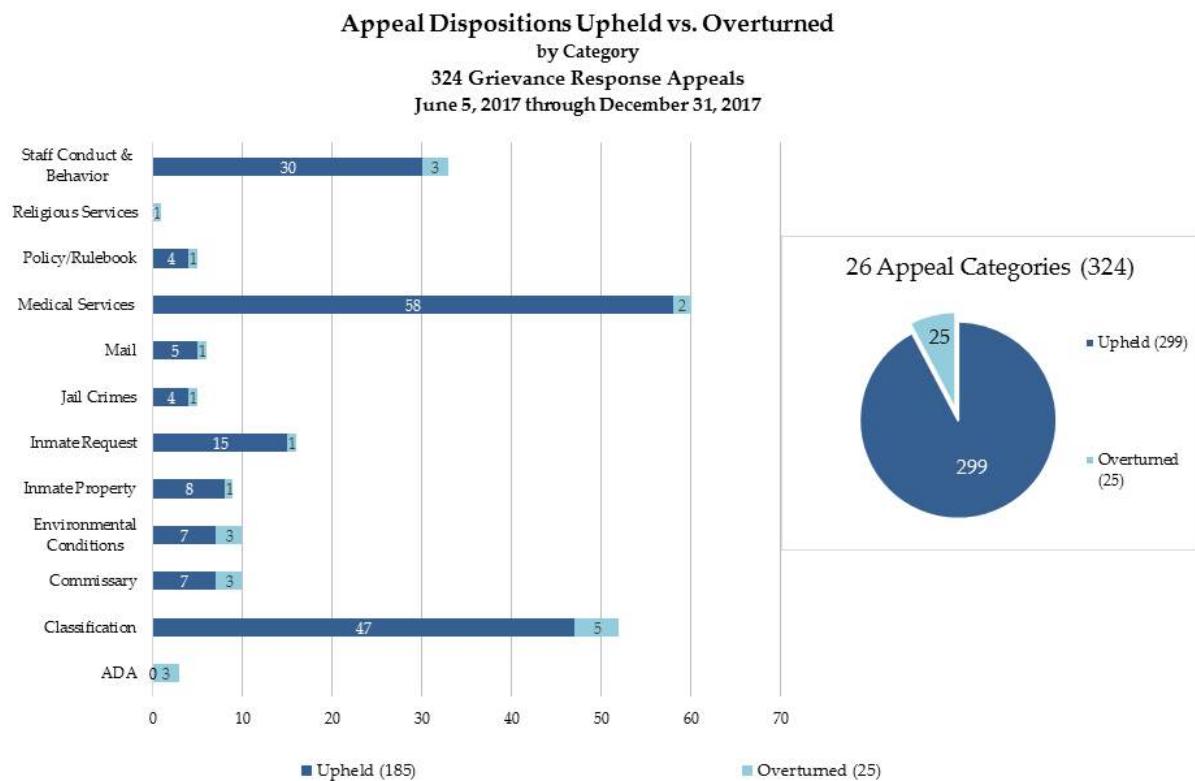
Figure 4



Grievance Response Timeliness

The chart above highlights served responses within the objective of responding to all grievances within a 30 day period versus those that did not meet that objective. As shown above, 95.8% of inmate grievances were responded to and served back to the complainant within 30 days of their submission date. The new ACeS tracking system provides consistent, real-time, highly visible graphical representation of information which describes the timeliness of grievance responses.

Figure 6



Grievance Appeals

The new ACeS grievance system and the grievance tracking and response processes that accompany it are valuable additions to the Inmate Grievance Process. Since implementation of ACeS in June 2017, 324 grievance appeals have been submitted (4.8% of all grievance submitted since June). A grievance appeal contests the response provided to the inmate. Grievance Appeals allow Custody management to evaluate both the complaint and its response. Since data collection began in June 2017, 25 appeals resulted in an overturned original response, in favor of the complaining inmate.

Conversely, 95.2% of all grievance responses were not appealed. While not a definitive data point for ensuring confidence in all the responses provided, the low number of appeals could speak well for the overall quality, objectivity, and appropriateness of grievance responses in general.

Conclusion

While available data is insufficient for more meaningful analysis, preliminary information does indicate categories in the jails which would benefit from further focus and evaluation, and other categories, such as the top five grievance categories representing more than 50% of all grievance submitted, which leave no doubt about opportunities for improvement. The data also includes significant positive feedback in the category "Positive Comments".

Among other conclusions provided here, this analysis validates the paramount importance of continued attention to improvements in the jails and to the grievance collection, response, and tracking process, as well as the importance of continued training and refinement of the grievance process. Over the next quarter, the Sheriff's Office will focus on enhancing the quality of responses from deputies when answering grievances.

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