



## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## COVID-19 POSITIVE YOUTH AND STAFF AT SANTA MARIA JUVENILE HALL

**(SANTA MARIA, CA)** – Chief Probation Officer Tanja Heitman reported today that four youth within the County of Santa Barbara Probation Department's Santa Maria Juvenile Hall (SMJH) have tested positive for COVID-19. In addition, one staff member assigned to SMJH has tested positive. Names of staff and youth are being withheld for medical and confidentiality reasons. As of July 3, the Probation Department has 28 youth at SMJH.

In preparation for potential COVID-19 scenarios, the Probation Department had previously developed a comprehensive COVID-19 Management Plan to address this situation, and immediately implemented the protocols to transfer youth with positive tests to a designated medical living unit within the facility. In conjunction with the Public Health Department and Wellpath Medical, the Department's response includes expanded testing for all youth and facility staff. In an effort to protect staff and youth in the facility pursuant to medical best practices, all youth entering the facility are moved into an Intake Unit for a 14-day precautionary quarantine period. While in the Intake Unit, youth receive enhanced monitoring and screening by medical staff for signs of illness. Prior to transfer to a living unit, youth are tested for COVID-19.

The Probation Department continues to be focused on and responsive to the mental and physical well-being of youth in this challenging and stressful situation, and are taking steps to ensure their wellness. The Department is continuing to monitor the situation daily and will make decisions based on best practices in health and safety standards for the youth under their care, their officers, and the community. Everyone is encouraged to visit the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department website at <https://publichealthsb.org/> for more information on COVID-19.

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