

For Immediate Release:

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Dignity and Power Now/ Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in Los Angeles Jail responds to Department of Justice Report

Los Angeles- For the last 18 months Dignity and Power Now/Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in L.A. Jails has been both organizing communities who have been directly impacted by Sheriff violence and advocating for the implementation of a permanent Civilian Oversight body to sit over the Inspector General's office for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Many of the members of the coalition have detailed the horrific experiences they have suffered inside Los Angeles County jails and those who suffer from mental illness seem to bare the brunt of the civil and human rights violations detailed by the current DOJ report.

According to Cherisse Foley, her son was denied medical care for up to 2 weeks while he was incarcerated inside Los Angeles County Twin Tower's Facility. " I called the Watch Commander, the nurse's station, the Sheriff's Department, and NO ONE could give me a straight answer as to why my son had not been given his medication for up to a week. When I finally was able to see my son in a court room he was strapped to a gurney with a spit-mask on his face. If the Sheriff's had given him his medication the moment my son entered the facility he would have not had to gone through such humiliating treatment!"

A significant amount of the people who suffer from mental illness inside of the jails are also homeless, communities of color, and often serial recidivist. If Los Angeles does not figure out a way to divert its vulnerable populations from its jails, we WILL not progress as a society. The Coalition is urging Los Angeles County to implement 1.) full mental health diversion 2.) hold off on the 1.8 billion dollar jail plan passed at the May 6th, 2014 Board meeting, and 3.) develop wrap around services, that could help release folks who are currently inside of the county jails and would be better off in a treatment facility.

*The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in L.A. Jails is a grassroots multiracial organization bringing together community organizations, health providers, clergy, attorneys, community residents, friends and families and survivors of the brutality inside L.A. jails to fight for real accountability. We are proposing a People's Civilian Review Board comprised wholly of citizens that has subpoena power, where citizen complaints are reviewed and investigated, and recommendations for disciplinary or policy action are made by the board.*