SYN. NO._____ AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY NOVEMBER 3, 2004

Over the past several years, growing demand on psychiatric emergency rooms and corresponding need for inpatient psychiatric beds in Department of Health Services' hospitals has become an increasing problem. The growth in the County's mentally ill population who need hospitalization is due to a number of factors, including the increasing numbers of individuals with mental illness and substance abuse problems and the reduction in the number of long-term inpatient psychiatric facilities across the County and the State. Additionally, state law requires hospitals to accept any patient who is presented in the emergency department by law enforcement as being a danger to themselves or others, thus limiting the ability of DHS to control the flow of patients into the hospital.

This increased demand is causing stress on the system and raises the risk of patients eloping or harming themselves. In fact, just this week there was an incident involving a patient in a DHS psychiatric emergency room who had been awaiting an inpatient bed for several days.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Directors of Health Services and Mental Health to:

1. Assess the factors leading to the increased demand on the psychiatric

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BURKE	_____
YAROSLAVSKY	_____
ANTONOVICH	_____
KNABE	_____

emergency rooms and inpatient psychiatric units at the DHS hospitals and

2. Develop a plan to immediately address the increased demand on the psychiatric emergency rooms and inpatient units and report back to the Board in two weeks with joint recommendations to address this problem.

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