



March

## PRISON LAW OFFICE

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18, 2013

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Riverside Prisoners Sue over Dangerous Jail Conditions**

*Prisoners Suffer Daily from Serious Untreated Medical and Mental Health and Unnecessary Harm and Injuries*

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RIVERSIDE, California (March 18, 2013) - Three prisoners in the Riverside Jails served a federal class action lawsuit today on Riverside County, claiming that the County is subjecting them to cruel and unusual punishment by depriving them of basic medical and mental health care. The prisoners seek an order from the court requiring County officials to provide basic health care for the people in their care and custody. A copy of the complaint is available at: [www.prisonlaw.com](http://www.prisonlaw.com).

Riverside County officials have known for years that the inadequate health care delivery system in the jails places prisoners at serious risk of harm, but instead of fixing the problems, the County has repeatedly slashed the health care budget. As a result, the jails' health care system does not have that capacity to identify and diagnose serious conditions, provide timely care, to employ adequate staff to meet prisoners' basic needs, or administer appropriate medications at the appropriate times.

Prisoners suffer as a result. For example,

- Angela Patterson, a plaintiff in the case, suffered nearly a year of delays, cancellations, and inadequate medical care for severe injuries she sustained in a car accident prior to entering the jail. As a result, a temporary filter implanted near her heart cannot be removed, and she will suffer a lifetime of anticoagulation medications and frequent laboratory monitoring, with significant risk of fatal bleeds and other complications.

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- Quinton Gray, another plaintiff, was given potent psychotropic medication without appropriate evaluation or follow-up, placing him at risk for life-threatening consequences. As a result of the medication mismanagement and treatment failures, he lives with agonizing side effects: twitching, tongue-biting, increased seizures and tongue swelling, racing thoughts, disorientation, depression, and chronic sleep loss.

“These people are entirely dependent on the jail for their health care – they have no other options,” said Donald Specter, Executive Director of the Prison Law Office. “The County does not provide the minimal care that the Constitution demands. To leave them in pain, at risk of life-threatening injury and permanent disability is inhumane.”

“Riverside County must comply with its constitutional obligations to provide adequate health care for prisoners,” said Shawn Hanson, a partner in the San Francisco office of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP.

The prisoners are represented by two law firms: (1) the Prison Law Office, a non-profit law firm, which has successfully challenged many unlawful conditions on behalf of California prisoners; and (2) Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, an international, full-service law firm that routinely represents pro bono clients in trial and appellate litigation.

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