



PRESS RELEASE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY Sheriff-Coroner

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Jim Hart
Sheriff-Coroner

Jail Incident

On 2-14-17, 22 year old Antonio Townsend was arrested by the Santa Cruz Police Department for the attempted robbery of the Del Pueblo Market and the robbery of a 7-Eleven convenience store in Santa Cruz. Townsend was subsequently booked into the Santa Cruz County Main Jail where he was assessed by Jail medical and mental health staff.

On 2-15-17 at about 11:45 am, Jail Correctional staff discovered Townsend hanging within the day room of his housing unit. Townsend was the only inmate in the day room at that time and had just had social interaction with Correctional staff about 20 minutes prior to his discovery.

Upon finding Townsend, Correctional Officers removed a sheet which he had tied around his neck. CPR was performed by Correctional Officers and emergency medical responders were called. Townsend regained a pulse and began breathing on his own. Townsend was transported via helicopter to a San Jose area trauma center.

Sheriff's Detectives and Crime Scene Investigators responded to the Jail to conduct an investigation, which is standard protocol whenever there is a critical incident of this type within a correctional facility. At this time there is no evidence of criminal activity or another inmate's involvement.

Our Jail systems utilize many resources to address inmates suffering from mental illness and those in crisis. These resources include jail medical and mental health teams, crisis intervention teams and assistance from medical professionals. Within hours of this incident, Townsend was seen by a multidisciplinary team consisting of medical, mental and correctional staff; Townsend gave no indication of self harm.

Sheriff Hart said, "Our staff works tirelessly around the clock to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those housed in our Jails. We are deeply saddened by Mr. Townsend's condition and will ensure a transparent and thorough investigation into this incident. Our thoughts remain with Mr. Townsend's family."

Townsend was released from custody and remains in critical condition at a San Jose area trauma center where he is receiving treatment and being attended by family.

For further details related to this incident please contact Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer Sgt. Chris Clark – 831-212-1801.