

## Our Voice: Two needless deaths too many at SJ jail Read more: Tracy Press - Our Voice Two needless deaths too many at SJ jail

For the second time in three years, a man has been found dead shortly after his release from the San Joaquin County Jail.

The first time was in March 2006, when 71-year-old Guillermo Davila of Tracy was found dead near a chicken coop 1½ miles away from the French Camp jail. He'd been released at 1:20 a.m. and was found 36 hours later. Davila, who had Alzheimer's disease and diabetes, was arrested for public intoxication, and deputies said they were unaware of his illnesses.

Now, it's 29-year-old Jeremy Lum who is dead. Lum was an athlete from Manteca with bipolar disorder who had also been arrested for public intoxication, late on the night of July 8. He was released the next morning and found in the San Joaquin River just last Sunday, a few miles from the jail.

In both cases, the men were released in French Camp with no transportation. Davila's family sued the county, and the case is ongoing. Lum's family is asking why their loved one was allowed to walk home when he was obviously disoriented.

In 2006, the sheriff's spokesman said the department would evaluate the way it releases people from jail. But did it?

If it turns out that the sheriff's department did everything by the book and that no one could have predicted that either man would walk away to his demise, maybe it's the system that failed Guillermo Davila and Jeremy Lum. Years ago, a crisis worker would have gone to the jail and evaluated the men and could have held them there for treatment.

State budget cuts have taken away services that at one time provided treatment and care. Some mental health services have been cut, and others are at risk.

Millions of people suffer from mental disorders that, with regular care, treatment and medication, allow them to lead normal lives.

But in California, where the cuts have only just begun, tragic stories like Davila's and Lum's may become more common.

Let's avoid that in San Joaquin County by evaluating the process of how people are released at our jail and make changes to the system — now.

**The issue** • San Joaquin County's record of releasing inmates who may or may not have the ability to safely find their way home.

**Our position** • We need to evaluate the process of how inmates are released at our county jail. by the [Tracy Press](#) Editorial Board