

Drugs - 4-13-69 Santa Cruz Board Orders Study Of Drug Problem

SANTA CRUZ — County Supervisors Tuesday took the first step to what appears to be an all-out drive to curb the mounting drug problem in Santa Cruz County.

The supervisors ordered county staff members to coordinate efforts in preparing a detailed report on the problem and to make recommendations on corrective measures the county can adopt.

The action was taken at the request of Supervisor Ralph Sanson, who says the drug problem has reached the crisis stage among young people.

Sanson's recommendation to appoint a committee to tackle the problem was postponed until after the report is finished.

Dr. Richard H. Svihus, county health officer, told supervisors of his concern over the drug problem and recommended the formation of a coordinating counsel made up of public employees who are experts in such fields as public health and education who can be enlisted to help abate the problem.

Dr. Svihus said the counsel should concern itself with the entire problem, from the use of alcohol and tobacco to the use of hard narcotics.

An education program — started at an early age — must be the basis of it all, said Dr. Svihus.

Sanson said he felt such a counsel or committee should be made up of elective representatives, who, he says, are

not now sufficiently involved in solving the problem.

Sanson said there appears to be a wide divergence of opinion among various "experts," as to the use of marijuana as against hard narcotics.

Any program on drug abuse should therefore be planned by elected officials, not staff members, said Sanson.

"Clearly, the concern we all have is the injury that is being done to our youth by drugs," Sanson said.

Dr. Svihus said he agreed with Sanson, and suggested that both elected officers and staff members be appointed to the group.

Supervisor Dan Forbus said he favored a county effort to solve the problem, adding, "What we should realize right

now is that this is going to cost money; nothing meaningful is going to be done without it."

Supervisor John McCallie indicated he feels that education is at the heart of the matter. "The first thing we must do is to identify what is causing the problem before we can effect a cure," said McCallie.

Supervisor's Chairman Henry Mello said he favors the county joining efforts to solve the problem.

He commented on a recent cartoon that he saw which, he said, showed a father, with a martini in one hand and cigarette in the other, entering his son's bedroom, saying, "Now son, I don't want to catch you using marijuana."