

Sonoma County to pay \$1.75 million for shooting of mentally ill teen

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The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors agreed today to pay \$1.75 million to settle a lawsuit over the fatal shooting of a 16-year-old boy in his Sebastopol home by sheriff's deputies.

Jeremiah Chass was in mental distress and had been acting irrationally when his family called for help March 12, according to a lawsuit the family filed in U.S. District Court in San Francisco. When deputies arrived, they shot him eight times because, they said, he refused to drop a knife.

Jeremiah, a junior at Analy High School, did not pose a threat to Deputies John Misita and Jim Ryan and had no criminal history or record of violent behavior, the lawsuit said.

"I have every reason to believe that the county is going to be re-examining the way it handles situations involving calls for help for those who are mentally ill," said Andrew Schwartz, a Walnut Creek attorney representing the boy's parents, Mark and Yvette Chass, and younger brother, Isaiah.

Santa Rosa police, who investigated the shooting, have said Jeremiah was holding the knife when deputies arrived at his home on the 1400 block of High School Road. Jeremiah continued to wave the knife threateningly after deputies tried to grab it and pepper-sprayed the youth, authorities said.

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