

Psychiatric Security Review Board

At a Glance

ELLEN LACHANCE, Executive Director

Established - 1985

Statutory authority - Connecticut General Statutes Section 17a-580 - 17a-603 inclusive

Central office - 505 Hudson Street, First Floor, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Number of Employee - 3

Recurring operating expenses - \$277,070

Organizational structure - One Administrative Unit

Mission

To protect the safety of Connecticut citizens and certain individuals by ordering appropriate treatment, confinement or conditional release of persons accused of crimes but found not guilty by reason of mental disease or mental defect.

Statutory Responsibility

The Psychiatric Security Review Board (the "Board"), determines the level of confinement and treatment, for those individuals found not guilty of a crime by reason of mental disease or defect, necessary to protect society. Acquittees are committed to the Board by the Superior Court. The Board, in turn, orders the appropriate level of supervision and treatment and orders the conditions under which an acquittee may be released into the community. The Board orders confinement in a maximum-security facility, approves temporary leave from a hospital setting, grants conditional release into the community and provides recommendations to the Superior Court in the matters of discharge from the Board and continued commitment.

Public Service

The general public is the beneficiary of the agency's work. During fiscal year 2013-2014, a total of seven individuals were committed to the Board by Superior Court and 12 individuals had their commitment terms extended by the court. During this fiscal year, the commitment term for one individual expired and six individuals were discharged by the court prior to the end of their commitment.

As of June 30, 2014, 144 individuals remained under the Board's jurisdiction. Of the 144 individuals, 34 were confined in maximum-security at Connecticut Valley Hospital, one acquittee was confined with the Department of Developmental Services, 81 individuals were ordered confined in a secure non-maximum security setting at Connecticut Valley Hospital and 26 individuals held conditional release status. In addition, one acquittee remained in federal custody serving a concomitant sentence with his Board commitment and one acquittee has remained on AWOL status since June 1991.

During this fiscal year, the Board held 121 hearings and 40 Board conferences, resulting in 133 Memoranda of Decision and 16 Reports to Court regarding the matters of Continued Commitment and Discharge from the jurisdiction of the Board.

There were no arrests of individuals on Conditional Release status while under the Board's jurisdiction during this fiscal year.

Improvements/Achievements 2013-2014

- Maintained zero percent criminal recidivism of conditionally released acquittees, as reflected by no criminal convictions
- During this fiscal year, the Governor nominated Cheryl Abrams to serve on the Board in the capacity of the Probation Expert, succeeding John Ryan, who was appointed in 1985. Ms. Abrams nomination was confirmed by the Connecticut State Legislature
- In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 37, issuing a state-wide review of agency regulations, the Board conducted a review of the existing regulations and identified those regulations that were obsolete and those in need of modification
- In accordance with the newly enacted Deadly Weapon Offender Registry, initiated implementation of the law, in collaboration with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and other relevant agencies
- Apprised the public of all Board hearings and conferences via timely posting of information to agency website
- Conducted agency procedures as required by law within statutorily mandated timeframes
- Updated statistical information related to acquittee confinement and movement into the community
- Maintained regularly scheduled meetings with the administration of Connecticut Valley Hospital to improve collaboration and address system issues
- Participated in regularly scheduled community providers meetings with the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services regarding conditionally released acquittees
- Conducted bimonthly Psychiatric Security Review Board trainings in partnership with the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services and provided on-site statewide training to a variety of community providers

Strategic Planning/Business Planning

The Board's strategic plan includes:

- Collaboration with the Office of Attorney General and the Board's Legislative Liaison to implement modifications and additions to the Board's statutes and regulations, as needed.

- Continued partnership with other state agencies to ensure collaboration and communication among the various stakeholders
- Cross-training of agency employees to effectively manage continuity of operations
- Continuation of the Board's collaborative planning process with the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services to address ongoing service systems issues and best practice protocols
- Maintain outreach to community agencies and the public regarding the Board's mission of public safety
- Update Agency Continuity of Operations Business Plan

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The Board members, as of June 30, 2014, were Sheila Hennessey, Chairperson, Cheryl Abrams, (expert in parole/probation), Susan Blair, M.S., L.P.C. (member with victim advocacy experience), Sylvia Cancela, M.B.A. (member of the general public), Mark Kirschner, Ph.D. (psychologist) and Justin Schechter, M.D. (psychiatrist), The Board is assisted by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services in meeting the Affirmative Action requirements of the statute and follows such regulations of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.