

Behavioral Health Sub-Committee
Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission
Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division
Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

June 4, 2020
10:00 – 11:00 am
(conference call)

Minutes

(Approved September 3, 2020)

In attendance: Michael Aiello, Chris Burke, Craig Burns, Michael Norko, Monte Radler, David Rentler

1. Introductions
2. Minutes of March 5, 2020 meeting approved without additions
3. Discussion of resuming criminal justice operations, inter-agency communications and preparation

DMHAS report: During the pandemic shutdown, Whiting has been able to discharge 35 patients who were sent for competency restoration. Courts waived hearings for those found competent and held videoconference (VC) hearings for others. A pre-trial detainee at York was found not competent and not restorable, released from York and admitted as a civil patient to CVH. Offices of Forensic Evaluation have a number of cases where evaluations were performed, and reports submitted, but hearings were not held before the courts closed. These will have to be re-evaluated when we have reasonably firm dates for court hearings so that the new evaluations do not go stale by the time of the hearing. We are acquiring more laptops so that three-person teams can interview a defendant in DOC via remote VC. It will be more complicated to arrange evaluations for defendants out in the community, as the offices are not currently open. This is likely to involve some combination of videoconference, phone interviews, and in-person interviews with one interviewer in room with patient and others joining by VC. Still have to figure out how to screen defendants at the office, provide face masks, clean rooms between use, etc.

DOC report: Hardware has been acquired and multiple facilities are now capable of supporting VC for telehealth, which can also be used intermittently for evaluations (York, Northern, Willard-Cybulski, Cheshire, McDougall-Walker, Hartford, Corrigan, Robinson). Two blocks in Garner are equipped, two more to be completed soon. Manson and Osborne are still to be equipped. At least one forensic evaluation has been facilitated via VC; this requires advance notice, taking time away from telehealth clinic, and presence of office or other staff to be with detainee outside room.

CSSD: As of June 8, 9 courts will be open part-time. This may increase to 13 in the subsequent weeks. Still only handling Priority 1 cases currently, but this is likely to expand in the near future. Arrests have increased, and the DOC pre-trial population is increasing again with warmer weather and more people outside their homes. Plea agreements have occurred by VC. Court offices/spaces are being evaluated now for need for plexiglass screens or other accommodations. Jail Diversion staff should consider what modifications to their spaces may be needed for their return to court.

All agencies expect increased work and interchange over the summer months. If there is a need for a call before the September meeting, we will set up an ad hoc conference call, or perhaps TEAMS meeting.
4. Other agency updates

In an email Brian Austin noted that he has been assigned to the civil division and will be helping the transition to a new representative for CJPAC.

Joseph Grzelak has moved to another agency. DMHAS Division of Forensic Services has now hired two new managers who will start work in June and July.

Joanna Norman from DOC has retired 5/29/20.

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- 5. CJPAC: Next meeting June 25, 2020

- 6. Scheduled Meetings: 10:00 am – 11:00 am)
 - September 3, 2020
 - December 3, 2020