

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

June 3, 2021
10:00 – 11:00 am
(via TEAMS)

Minutes

In attendance: Michael Aiello, Chris Burke, Thomas Burr, Jillian Cundari, Donna DeLuca.

Tasha Hamm-Busha, Michael Norko, Monte Radler, David Rentler, Chelsea Ross, Sally Zanger

1. Introductions. Donna DeLuca was welcomed back as the Family Liaison for Confidant Health.
2. Minutes of the March 4, 2021 meeting were approved without additions or corrections.
3. Discussion of resuming criminal justice operations, inter-agency communications and preparation

DMHAS report from Michael Norko and Chris Burke:

Competency to stand trial evaluations have been completed at an average rate of 9.4 per week across the state over the last four months. The pre-COVID averages ranged from 11-13. This has been accomplished with the assistance of the Judicial Branch, which has allowed us to use vacant courtrooms as venues to do the evaluations, and of DOC for transporting defendants from facilities to the designated courtrooms. Evaluations have also been done in our offices, and some in DOC facilities in person.

DMHAS client-facing activities resumed June 1. Managers are expected back to their offices July 1, with up to 50% telework permitted. Negotiations are under way with union staff about details of their return to the workplace.

PTIP referrals continue to increase at a modest pace, which works well for our providers.

Data from Judicial revealed that in CY19, 43% of defendants referred for competency evaluation had misdemeanor-only charges. We are continuing to work on developing a pilot program to create forensic respite beds in the community to which such defendants can be referred in lieu of competency evaluation and continued criminal justice processes. Various grant fund opportunities are being utilized to finance the pilot.

Other program developments via available grant funds include: an initiative to increase the pace of Temporary Leave and Conditional Release applications from Whiting Forensic Hospital via hiring additional case managers. A new re-entry program focused on York CI and New London partners is getting started. A new police diversion program for six police departments along the shoreline will provide clinical support to officers during overnight hours.

Trainings have been provided to states attorneys on competence to stand trial. We are hoping to do a training for judges this year, at least to focus on 54-56d(m), the statute related to findings of not competent and not restorable.

DOC report from Tasha Hamm-Busha:

Procedures are returning to normal in DOC. The carts for the computers purchased through DMHAS grant to increase videoconference capacity arrived this morning at Osborne.

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Parole report from David Rentler:

On June 1, Parole and Community Services resumed all in-person reporting. They are developing a training re collaboration between Parole and Community Services and DMHAS, intended for staff in both agencies.

CSSD report from Michael Aiello:

CSSD has been involved in a housing survey as noted in last minute. CSSD met with DOC yesterday to invite DOC to conduct similar survey. With that information, cost implications can be assessed.

They are working with staff at Sierra to enhance clinical services for mental health. Connection has moved the program from its criminal justice side to its behavioral health side. A site visit with DMHAS Division of Forensic Services is planned for next week.

ASIST RFP has been posted for CSSD contractors.

New arrangements have been made in New Haven for Rapid Re-Housing with probation clients through Columbus House and the Department of Housing. This is being expanded to Hartford.

CSSD staff are back to five days per week in office starting June 4. All groups will resume, as will polygraphs.

There are opportunities for CSSD to collaborate with DMHAS and DOC on new funding grants, since our services overlap, and we already collaborate on several programs. Discussion ensued about the three agencies trying to meet to consider the range and type of grants currently in play that might be utilized to enhance services.

NAMI report from Thomas Burr:

NAMI-CT has a new interim Executive Director, Liz Taylor. NAMI-CT continues to await the passage of the state budget to assess the impact on mental health services.

Public defender report from Monte Radler:

The criminal justice system is just beginning to ramp up.

CLRP report from Sally Zanger:

No new updates. CLRP will be returning to their offices in July.

Confidant Health report from Donna DeLuca:

The Cares Group has become part of Confidant Health and Donna is rejoining the BHS again. During COVID their 8 support groups were combined into one online group. Confidant Health has an app-based model to help people through transitions by connecting them to a care navigator who can put connect them to an array of services. The service costs \$1 for participants, but the costs are subsidized by other programs for which those with more resources are able to pay. Through the app, they have been able to sustain their work with individuals and families. Donna offered to send materials about their programs, which may be of benefit to our various systems serving people in transitions.

- 4. Other agency updates: none

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- 5. CJPAC: Next meeting June 24, 2021.

- 6. BHS Scheduled Meetings: 10:00 am – 11:00 am via TEAMS
 - September 2, 2021
 - December 2, 2021
 - 2022 meetings to be determined. The plan will be to continue meeting via TEAMS, to eliminate any travel-related barriers to attendance/participation.