

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

July 7, 2022
10:00 – 11:00 am
(via TEAMS)

Minutes

In attendance: Michael Aiello, Christopher Burke, Thomas Burr, Judy Dowd, Gail Hardy, Michael Norko,
David Rentler, Sally Zanger

1. Minutes of the March 3, 2022 meeting were approved without additions or corrections.
2. Discussion of resuming criminal justice operations, inter-agency communications and preparation.

DMHAS report from Chris Burke:

Competency to stand trial evaluations have been accomplished at an average rate of 6-8 per week, from April through June, with 89 evaluations completed during that time. Evaluations being conducted in the community offices and DOC facilities through telehealth (approx. 50 telehealth in last three months). Telehealth evaluations are now being successfully completed on a consistent basis, after much help from Dr. Burns in getting the system operational.

Pretrial Intervention Program (PTIP) referrals continue to increase, at a pace that the providers are able to manage. We are transitioning to the new 12-session programs, with previous clients continuing to complete the 10- and 15-session programs. We are preparing a new RFP for contracts anticipated to begin in October 2022..

An ABH Case Manager has been hired to work with PSRB clients who are on TL and CR. Ayana Smith is located at CVH and has been providing additional support to two clients so far.

The new re-entry program (funded through a TTI-NASMHPD grant) with Alliance for Living, Safe Futures, and York Correctional Institution (YCI) is doing education and trauma work. DOC has made 23 referrals; 18 of these have completed screening and been released from YCI. Of the 23 referrals, 15 women reported mental health needs and 17 reported substance use needs.

A new police diversion program (also funded through a TTI-NASMHPD grant) for six police departments along the shoreline is providing clinical support to officers during overnight hours via face-to-face or telehealth contact with a clinician. The clinicians are building relationships with the police departments. 20 clients have been referred by law enforcement to date.

A new Recovery Coach pilot began July 2022 with CT Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR). Three recovery coaches are linked with jail diversion teams in the Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Hartford areas. Presentations were made at each of the courts about the introduction of the recovery coaches.

The DMHAS Division of Forensic Services will be hiring two social workers to re-establish the Conditional Release Services Unit (CRSU). The CRSU will resume responsibility for attending all-provider meetings for insanity acquittees, completing six-month reports to the PSRB, and testifying at hearings. This will relieve the Offices of Forensic Evaluation of these responsibilities, so they can focus on competency evaluations, reports, and testimony.

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DMHAS report from Michael Norko:

The Enhanced Forensic Respite Bed pilot program in Bridgeport has successfully admitted and discharged eight clients so far, with one currently in the respite bed. In 90% of cases, there was no competency to stand trial evaluation ordered, which was the primary goal of this program to reduce the use of the competency process for defendants with only misdemeanor charges. The legislature funded an expansion from 3 to 5 beds in Bridgeport, plus the addition of two additional pilots of 5 beds each in two other courts, location still to be determined. The initial funding comes from ARPA dollars, but the costs are annualized in the state budget following the exhaustion of those funds. The DMHAS Research Unit is conducting an outcome analysis of the pilot and has already begun interviewing clients. The analysis will include clinical, housing, and legal outcomes (disposition of charges, re-arrest) as well as client satisfaction.

Division of Criminal Justice report from Gail Hardy:

Patrick Griffin was sworn in as the new Chief State’s Attorney in May. One of his first tasks is to replace the many retirees who left state service June 30. Vicki Melchiorre was among the retirees; she will return as a TWR to continue to represent the state at PSRB hearings. Trials continue apace.

CSSD report from Michael Aiello:

CSSD has announced RFPs for new ASIST contracts; Meriden is being added as a new location and New London will replace Norwalk. CSSD will continue to fund ASIST solely, but the program will remain open to DOC.

CSSD has received \$2.9m in ARPA funds (two-year funding) for mostly pre-trial clients. They will be expanding scattered-site housing from 8 apartments with 16 beds by an additional 16 apartments with 32 beds. These will be earmarked for pre-trial clients with mental health needs, in conjunction with outpatient mental health, case management in the apartments, and probation/bail supervision. The contract with The Connection Inc. will be expanded for this purpose, with services located in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and New London. The funds will also be used for rapid re-housing and to expand Recovery House.

Parole report from David Rentler:

The most active project at this time is the 1115 waiver transition. The Director and Deputy Director both retired in June. Rhianna Gingras is serving as Acting Director.

NAMI-CT report from Thomas Burr

No specific updates. Thomas expressed appreciation for the new funding available for mental health services, and the hope that time-limited federal grant funding would become annualized where outcomes of pilot programs prove favorable.

CLRP report from Sally Zanger:

No updates to report.

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- 3. Other agency updates: none

- 4. CJPAC: Next meeting July 21, 2022 (re-scheduled from July 28)

- 5. Scheduled meetings of the Behavioral Health Subcommittee:
 - September 1, 2022
 - November 10, 2022
 - January 12, 2023
 - March 9, 2023
 - May 11, 2023