

Behavioral Health Sub-Committee

Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission
Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division
Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

December 4, 2020
10:00 – 11:00 am
(via TEAMS)

Minutes

In attendance: Chris Burke, Thomas Burr, Tasha Hamm-Busha, Gail Hardy, Thomas Kocienda, Michael Norko, Monte Radler, David Rentler, Sally Zanger

- 1. Introductions. Gail Hardy was welcomed as the new representative from the Office of the Chief State’s Attorney
- 2. Minutes of September 3, 2020 meeting approved without additions
- 3. Discussion of resuming criminal justice operations, inter-agency communications and preparation

DMHAS report from Michael Norko and Chris Burke:

Since the last meeting, the Governor moved the state to Phase 3 COVID status, at which point DOC resumed in-person professional visits and evaluations. Our forensic teams conducted some evaluations at facilities that went well, where there were large enough spaces for 4 people to be in a room with appropriate distancing. Other facilities only have professional visiting rooms, which are not large enough. This is particularly the case at the Correctional Centers. The video system used by the courts was explored (For the Record, FTR) but the upgrade of this system is proceeding slowly due to the physical plant challenges of installations in facilities in use. We met with Judge Gold to discuss other alternatives, resulting in a pilot where two detainees were transported to a GA14 courtroom where the Hartford team conducted the evaluation. This went smoothly and we will be discussing later today with Judge Gold next steps in other courts. There are currently 42 cases of individuals in custody with orders for competency evaluations. Since March, 112 evaluations have been completed.

Referrals of cases for Pre-Trial Intervention Programs (alcohol and drug education and treatment) are picking up slowly, which is good news for our private non-profit providers who have had significant decrease in come with the cessation of referrals. Nonetheless, 712 clients have completed PTIP since July via telehealth, plus another 43 who completed programs in person.

Jail Diversion referrals are down since COVID, but still significant. From March to Nov of 2019 there were 2069 clients evaluated, with 1207 of them diverted. In the same period in 2020 there were 706 clients evaluated, with 418 diverted.

DOC report from Thomas Kocienda:

Garner CI and York CI are currently in lockdown due to rise in COVID cases. However, DOC continues to be able to transport individuals unless they have recently tested positive for COVID or are in quarantine due to exposure to known positive case(s). DOC is doing PCR testing two days prior to transports and can also do rapid testing on the day of transport. The expansion of the effort to conduct competence to stand trial evaluations in courtrooms should be able to proceed, as long as individuals are not affected by COVID restrictions as above.

Tasha Hamm-Busha reported that in some exceptional cases, videoconference interviews have been arranged for individuals at Osborne.

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Parole report from David Rentler:

With start of Phase 3, face-to-face contacts with parolees resumed for those on intensive or maximum supervision. Most of the halfway houses are operating at 85% capacity, with three houses operating at 100% capacity.

Division of Criminal Justice report from Gail Hardy:

The division is working to get all JDs operating to the extent possible. Recent occurrence of positive COVID cases among staff in New Britain have limited the work in that court. In general, more cases are being heard as operations continue to expand.

NAMI report from Thomas Burr:

Nami-CT is finalizing its legislative priorities and waiting to see how the legislative session will be handled.

Monte Radler reported no new updates from the Public Defenders' office. Sally Zanger reported no new updates from CLRP.

4. Other agency updates

Gail Hardy has replaced Sharmese Walcott as representative of the Division of Criminal Justice on the subcommittee.

5. CJPAC: The December meeting has been cancelled. Next meeting January 18, 2021.

6. BHS Scheduled Meetings: 10:00 am – 11:00 am via TEAMS

- March 4, 2021
- June 3, 2021
- Sept 2, 2021