

Psychiatric Security Review Board

At a Glance

ROBERT B. BERGER, ESQ., Chairman

Established – 1985

Statutory Authority – Conn. Gen. Stat.

Sec. 17a-581

***Central Office – 505 Hudson Street, First Floor,
Hartford, Connecticut 06106***

Number of Employees – 4

Recurring Operating Expenses - \$346,661

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”), through an administrative hearing process, determines the level of supervision and treatment for an acquittee deemed necessary to protect society. The Board takes jurisdiction over the acquittee and determines the level of confinement and circumstances under which an acquittee can be released into the community. The Board can order confinement in a maximum-security facility, approve temporary leave from a hospital setting, grant conditional release into the community and provide 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 2005-2006, 173 persons were under the Board's jurisdiction. Five persons were committed to the Board by the Superior Court. Fifteen acquittees' commitment terms were extended by the Superior Court. Seven acquittees were removed from the Board's jurisdiction: three acquittees' commitment terms expired; three acquittees were discharged by the Superior Court and one acquittee died.

The status of individuals under the jurisdiction of the Board as of June 30, 2006 is as follows: 25-percent (42 acquittees) confined in maximum-security at Connecticut Valley Hospital, 58-percent (97 acquittees) confined to a non-maximum security setting at Connecticut Valley Hospital, 16-percent (26 acquittees) on conditional release. One acquittee is in the custody of the Commissioner of Mental Retardation and one acquittee is housed at Garner Correctional Institution following a criminal conviction while residing in Connecticut Valley Hospital. The Board held 192 hearings and 17 case conferences resulting in 163 Memoranda of Decision being issued.

Effectiveness is measured by the recidivism rate of this criminal population. During this fiscal year, there were no arrests for acquittees residing in the community. One acquittee was convicted of escape from custody while a patient at Connecticut Valley Hospital and was apprehended within a few hours.

Improvements/Achievements 2005-2006

- Collaborated with the Judicial Department to implement Board “no contact” orders on the statewide registry.
- Published new Conditional Release Manual in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services (DMHAS). Posted manual on the Board’s website to be used as a resource by community providers.
- Revised and implemented conditional release reporting and monitoring schedule.
- Upgraded agency website with option of downloading a variety of forms, training materials and articles.
- Partnered with DMHAS in facilitating a new educational forum specific to conditional release and temporary leave supervisors.
- Maintained zero percent recidivism of conditional release population, as reflected by no arrests.
- Collaborated with academic institutions regarding potential research publications.
- Compiled statistics and information related to acquittee confinement and movement into the community.
- Collaborated with the Department of Information Technology regarding future enhancements to the Board’s database.
- Maintained regularly scheduled treatment team meetings with community providers and DMHAS regarding all conditionally released acquitees.
- Provided statewide on-site training to a variety of community providers.
- Updated Board staff in the procedures of responding to Freedom of Information requests.
- Initiated improvements to the Board’s medical and legal records.
- Upgraded telecommunication system.
- Upgraded office computers and printers in collaboration with information systems personnel.
- Maintained collaboration with DMHAS regarding a variety of system and communication issues.

Reducing Waste

- Maintained spending at allocated levels.
- Complied with Executive Order Number 30 through the posting of documents on the agency website, thus reducing the need to copy training packets.

Strategic Planning/Business Planning

The Board's strategic plan includes:

- Obtaining access to the Criminal Justice Information Database to better serve the Board’s mission of public safety.
- Continuing collaboration with the Governor’s Office to fill appointed Board vacancies.
- In collaboration with the Office of Attorney General, continue to review the Board’s Statutes and Regulations to maintain the integrity of the Board’s mission.
- Continuing outreach efforts to community providers and the public at large to provide education regarding the oversight of the acquittee population.
- Partnering with academic institutions with the goal of providing Board data to the national forensic community.
- The Board continues a collaborative planning process with DMHAS to address service systems issues and best practice protocols.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The Board members for 2005-2006 were Robert Berger, Esq., John Ryan, Sylvia Cancela and Susan Blair. The positions of psychiatrist and psychologist are currently vacant.

The Board is assisted by DMHAS in meeting the Affirmative Action requirements of the statute and follows such regulations of DMHAS.