

 **SACRAMENTO COUNTY Mental Health Board Adult System of Care Committee**

ANNOUNCEMENT – HYBRID TELECONFERENCE MEETING

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

530pm – 7:30pm

[7001-A East Parkway Sacramento CA 95823](#)

Members Present: William Cho, Ryan Gallant (staff: Michael AmeneYRO)

Members Absent: Brad Lueth, Malika Walsh

BHS Staff: Alondra Thompson, Andrea Crook, Allison Williams, Dana Sebastian

Guests: Mykel Gayent, Melinda Avey, Kaino Hopper, Corrine McIntosh Sako, Keyan, Patricia Wentzel

AGENDA ITEM

I. Welcome and Introductions

Members, Staff and Guests

Chair Cho commenced the meeting at 5:33pm and introductions were made.

II. Presentation – A Discussion of Mental Health Court and Mental Health Diversion

Origins, Policies, Practices, Demographics, Statistics, and Relevant Issues presented by: Elise Stafford, Deputy District Attorney, Collaborative Courts Unit, and Judith Mummert, Deputy District Attorney, Collaborative Courts Unit

- Judith shared the intent is to stop crime by getting people the treatment they need.
- Treatment can bring down recidivism.
- Mental Health Court was established in 2007.
- 5.7% if general population has a serious mental illness, approximately 18.5% of arraigned defendants and 23% of California prison inmates have a serious mental illness.
- See attached presentation.

Questions from Board:

- Q: Why is DUI excluded from Mental Health Court?
- A: Serial DUI is handled in DUI Court.
- Are any referrals denied due to funding or staffing?
- A: None in Mental Health Court. Not having a provider might be an issue, but no one is denied related to funding.
- Q: Is treatment paid for by the County?
- A: Empower is not paid by the County, it is paid by a grant. Also, treatment is paid by private insurance if person has a private provider.
- Q: Do you think family members perceive this process as welcoming?
- A: Not allowed to give any information out if the defendant says they do not want them involved. Through the website, family members can obtain the person’s next court date with their name. An example was shared of a mother spoke at son’s hearing which supported the judge in making a decision.
- Q: What is the success rate for individuals that go to rehab and it is voluntary?
- A: Do not have the statistic for rehab success. It can be voluntary and if assessed at a lower level and there is a slip up, can be sanctioned and then treatment becomes a requirement.

- Q: Last year, the Mental Health Board had goal of making a recommendation for Mental Health Court the length of time. Individual might be waiting in jail just to receive eligibility assessment. Example shared of a person referred in July and was just assessed last week. At the 90 day mark, a re-assessment is needed. Any insight into what seems to be causing the delay?
- A: Bottleneck with BHS in getting assessments and lack of bodies. We have gotten rid of some calendars to make more room. We need another judge, another courtroom, and more attorneys. Two months ago, we implemented prioritization of people that were about to lose their linkage. 10-15 are heard a day. Someone at BHS will email us to notify us of who is expiring so we can prioritize.
- Q: With the two-year window, why does this gap exist? If want more people to go through Mental Health Court, then why not have a more direct route?
- A: It takes someone two years to successfully complete. If they fail and would have the same provider that they would get in Mental Health Court, then they will be denied. Its not a gap, it's the same County services.
- Q: Regarding 290s (those convicted of sex crimes) and arson exclusion from Mental Health Court.
- A: Public safety, and it is hard to house and treat. No provider will take a sex offender or arson. Everyone that participates in the program is living in the community.
- Q: What has been done to shorten the time for assessments?
- A: Initial lag due to having to prove a nexus between the crime and mental health. That was eliminated and it is now presumed. That has shortened the amount of time.
- Q: Are the outcomes relatively more lenient? Are defendants trying to skirt the system?
- A: Diversion is pre-plea. Mental Health Court is not more lenient. It is what we think is fair, should the defendant be successful. The benefit of the program is the incentive. If successful in treatment, the case is dismissed.
- Q: What are the recidivism rates in this program vs. general criminal rate?
- A: We do not have that data. Rules say we cannot run rap sheets on random people.
- Q: Is there something the Mental Health Board can do to advocate for your program?
- A: Staffing. Need more attorneys to handle the requests coming through. Need more judges, lawyers, BHS staff, probation staff.

III. Committee Review and Planning

Review of 2023 and Planning for 2024 Activities, Focus, Goals, Structure, etc.

- Chair Cho motioned to table item for next meeting due to time and encourage greater participation from members.
- Ryan seconded and the item was tabled for the next meeting.

IV. Member Announcements or Comments

- No additional comments.

V. Public Comment

3 Minutes per Person

- Why are folks waiting 3 to 4 months to be dispositioned and to be seen? This is a really long time. Time is of the essence, and they are more likely to spiral into crisis the longer it takes. The Public Defender is well funded. BHS is having a workforce crisis. Advocate for BHS pay to be comparable to Public Defender.

VI. Adjournment Until Next Meeting

4th Tuesdays of Each Month

Chair Cho adjourned the meeting at 7:34 pm. The next Adult System of Care meeting will be November 28, 2023, from 5:30 – 7:30 pm, at Department of Human Assistance office at 2700 Fulton Ave, Sacramento, CA 95825, room 58.