



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
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January 12, 2016

TO: Each Supervisor
FROM: Robin Kay, Ph.D.
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SUBJECT: **REPORT BACK ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE TO CUSTODY INSTITUTION FOR MENTAL DISEASE STEP-DOWN PILOT PROGRAM (ITEM NO. 16, AGENDA OF DECEMBER 8, 2015)**

INTRODUCTION

On December 8, 2015, your Board approved a Motion by Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich regarding implementation of an Alternative to Custody Institution for Mental Disease (IMD) Step-Down pilot program. The Motion directed the Acting Director of Mental Health and the Sheriff to provide definitions of program success, including the measurements of outcomes which will serve as the basis for a decision regarding extending the pilot program in each of the two subsequent fiscal years. The Motion also directed the Departments to provide a report near the conclusion of the first cycle of the pilot program including information regarding the program's successes (or failures), any AWOLs or retention issues, any modifications made or corrective actions taken and a recommendation concerning program extension. This memorandum will provide you with background, program description, admission criteria, and outcome measures for the Alternative to Custody Institution for Mental Disease Step-Down pilot program. A report on the outcomes of the program will be submitted at the conclusion of the first year of operation.

BACKGROUND

Of the over 19,000 individuals currently housed in the Los Angeles County jails, approximately 3,400 or 18% are diagnosed with mental illness, making the County jails one of the largest mental health providers in the country. Many of these individuals have mental health needs that would be better served by community providers of mental health services, yet they have not been successfully linked to and engaged in community treatment. Over the years, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) have developed a limited number of projects to address the needs of these individuals. As the number of inmates with mental health needs continues to increase, the need for expanded diversion and alternative custody programs has become even more critical. Accordingly, DMH and the LASD have developed the Alternative to Custody (ATC) IMD Step-Down Program to provide augmented residential mental health services for adult males 18 years of age and over that require intensive co-occurring mental health and substance use care, are within 60-180 days of release from jail, and qualify for AB 109 funding. Program participants would maintain an alternative

custody legal status, remain under the jurisdiction of the LASD, and serve the remaining 60-180 days of their sentences in the ATC IMD Step-Down program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The ATC IMD Step-Down will serve up to 42 individuals at any given time from a licensed Adult Residential Facility (ARF). Residential and mental health and substance use treatment services will be provided by Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center, a contracted provider with extensive experience providing intensive residential mental health treatment services to individuals with criminal justice histories.

Eligible candidates will be individuals who have been incarcerated for low level and non-violent offenses that appear to be the result of or associated with their mental illness and have no history of sexual, arson, or assault charges. Referrals to the program will be provided by the LASD and screened for mental health and substance use treatment needs by Jail Mental Health Services (JMHS). Once a candidate has been screened by JMHS, LASD will conduct additional screenings to ensure the candidate's appropriateness for release. Following clearance from LASD, all program admissions will be authorized through DMH Countywide Resource Management (CRM). Candidates selected for the program will receive pre-release orientation to the program prior to transfer from jail to the residential program to prepare for the transition to intensive community-based services. Candidates will be transferred from the correctional facilities to the residential site by LASD personnel. JMHS and Jail Linkage Program staff will collaborate on the transfer to ensure transfer summaries and medication prescriptions are provided. Additionally, program candidates will be outfitted with Global Positioning System tracking devices as an additional security measure.

This specialized intensive residential program will employ a recovery approach with a strength-based focus in order to empower program participants to develop their goals toward community re-integration, life skills acquisition, and the capacity to increase current levels of community functioning. As individuals complete the program they will transition into Full Service Partnerships, Wellness and Recovery Centers, and supported or independent living. Graduates of the program will be followed for up to 30 days after discharge to ensure linkage has been established to community-based services.

ATC IMD STEP-DOWN ADMISSION CRITERIA

- Must be male between 18 and 59 years of age.
- Must not be a registered sex offender, have a history of fire setting, or assault charges.
- Must have a serious and persistent mental illness (Schizophrenia or psychotic affective disorder) and be amenable to treatment and anticipated release to a less intensive level of care within 6-12 months.
- Must be ambulatory.
- Current TB test or chest X-Ray and medication administration record prior to admission.
- Must be a Los Angeles County DMH consumer.
- Must not require treatment in a locked setting.

- Must require the intensity of services provided by this level of care as evidenced by:
 - Risk of discontinuing treatment, including medication compliance.
 - Inability to provide basic living necessities without intensive support and supervision.
 - Inability to access mental health treatment, benefits establishment, physical healthcare, self-help and peer support groups, money management, and treatment for co-occurring substance abuse disorders without intensive support and supervision.

Program Outcomes:

- Number of referrals the program receives.
- Number of program participants that are low, medium, and high recidivism risk as measured by a validated assessment tool.
- Number of individuals that complete treatment and number of individuals that did not complete treatment.
- For those individuals who enroll in treatment, percent that have been re-arrested within one year post-treatment enrollment.
- For those individuals who enroll in treatment, percent that have been taken to emergency rooms, inpatient units, and crisis stabilization units.
- Number successfully linked to ongoing mental health services.
- Number successfully linked to community housing.
- Number referred to vocational and/or educational services.

If you have questions or your staff would like further information regarding this report, please feel free to contact Robin Kay, Ph.D., Acting Director, at (213) 738-4108 or rkay@dmh.lacounty.gov.

RK:mm

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
Department of Health Services
Sheriff's Department