

HOWARD COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

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Behavioral Health Task Force Criminal Justice Sub-Committee January 28, 2015

As a follow up to the last meeting on 1/9/15, Wells, Murphy and Henson met with Judge Reese on 1/16/15 to update her on the discussion about a staff position to manage a supervision program for individuals with mental health issues who are involved with the court system. Judge Reese was in favor of this program.

Committee discussed staffing from the local Drug Court. Chris Collins, a Health Department employee of their Behavioral Health program, provides status updates and other information to the court on those individuals served by the Drug Court.

Concerns were raised regarding the need to have “specialists” within the various agencies involved with the court: State’s Attorney, Public Defender and Community Supervision. While nothing is official, this is done on an unofficial basis at the present time.

Team Approach: Each agency would delegate staff to attend a regularly scheduled monthly meeting to troubleshoot cases and provide feedback across the system. Community providers would be represented on this group as well.

Staff Position: Committee agreed to request funding for a staff position to co-ordinate across agencies and help individuals navigate community resources. Currently there is a full time mental health position within the Detention Center and the local police department. Both staff work closely with the court system. However, the missing piece is someone to follow-up with individuals once they have been to court to assure that they follow through with the court’s recommendations. It was also felt that individuals could be offered access to community services (housing assistance, vocational, etc.) as part of this program.

The sub-committee agreed to pursue funding for this staff position in the FY16 county budget, with support from all partner agencies.

Youth Diversion Program: Turner staffs this program within the HCPD. They hold meetings with youth and family to address issue that led to arrest. The Mediation and Conflict Resolution Center (MCRC) has provided services to families in this program.

CJPC Business: Since this is also the quarterly meeting of the CJPC, Jack brought up the issue related to urinalysis done before bail review at HCDC. Lately they have seen a spike in individuals testing positive for suboxone. There was discussion about how best to share “trends” with law enforcement and the court system.