

**Tri-Branch Task Force on Justice &  
Mental Health (Co-occurring) Collaboration  
Minutes from December 16, 2010**

Attendees: Rep. Alice Emmons, Sec. Rob Hofmann, the Hon. Paul Reiber, AJ Ruben, Mike Sabourin, Mike Mrowicki (House Rep.), Judge Amy Davenport, John Perry (public member), Ed Haak (ED Director in St. Albans), Michael Hartman (DMH), Barbara Cimaglio (VDH/ADAP), Patrick Flood (AHS), Anna Saxman (Defender General's Office), George Karabakakis (HCRS/Sparrow)

Guests: Bud Meyers (UVM), Andy Lowe (UVM), Steve Boosh, Kim Bushey (DOC), Tony Folland, Heather Allin (DAIL), John Rogers (UVM), Robert Appel (Human Rights Commission), Jim Mongeon (State's Attorneys)

Staff: Karen Gennette (Court Administrators Office), Connie Schütz (DMH), Patty Breneman (Court Administrators Office)

**I. & II. Introductions & Welcome**

The September 23rd minutes were accepted unanimously.

Chief Justice Reiber recognized Rob Hofmann for his work on the Task Force. A unanimous motion passed recognizing him for his work and wishing him well.

Introduction of Patty Breneman.

**III. Update on the Work of the Task Force**

Patrick Flood: The Criminal Justice Core Team (the implementation team of the Tri-Branch Task Force) is working on a more systemic approach so that agencies and DOC can implement effective discharge and administrative planning. The biggest challenge in accomplishing this is the cultural difference. DOC paperwork and other administrative barriers are also presenting issues. Designated agencies receive a list of all people who are serious functionally impaired (SFI) being release from DOC. Designated agencies and DOC need buy-in from all community supports in order to make the transition successful. Other cultural factors involved include levels of variation across the state within local law enforcement and DAs.

There is a need to have solutions emerge at the local level as well as continue to be accountable. Incentive based approaches to make change. Change should rest solely on the individuals providing services and should also be bridged to medical community so that there is a handoff and connection to primary health care provider—possibly through patient consent. Discussion of the creation of a manual of procedures in order to standardize service provision, in conjunction with state-sponsored technical assistance. Need to have an understanding that every agency/organization is collectively accountable, which would be backed by legislative support and communication.

Enhancing crisis teams at the designated agencies to respond to more social service-related calls made to emergency services could also lead to potential savings. Some the emergency service responders don't have the tools or skills needed to effectively handle the SFI population. Connection between social services and law enforcement should be cultivated. Much of the

groundwork legislation has already been done. Communities might benefit from the creation of a menu of evidence-based interventions and practices that work, which could also be combined with other individualized services that the community service providers need. Reliance on emergency services could be diminished with access to primary health resources.

Connie Schütz: Through the first half of 2011, a series of webinars developed by the Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections will be presented to several criminal justice oriented professional groups followed by a discussion and creation of possible next implementation steps. There will possibly be a kick-off event to bring all the professions together. DMH is looking at implementing a technology transfer initiative that uses video-conferencing.

Report to the Legislature on Act 179 Pilot The Windsor Sparrow Project: Bud Meyers from the Jeffords Center at UVM discussed the Report to the Legislature on Act 179 Pilot The Windsor Sparrow Project due January 15, 2011. The report looks at the 17 cases that Sparrow served, which, according to conservative estimates saved 4800 bed days (~\$314,800). This number is DOC specific—it does not account for bed days at other facilities. VCIC will also look into 6 months recidivism rate and the potential savings that were incurred as well as prior bed days being used before Sparrow and after.

Discussion about the need to have a level of transparency about individuals' engagement in treatment to people involved in the judicial process—this would also be incentive for individuals to engage in treatment. The evidence-based population that are served (and that has the most potential for cost savings) are people who are high risk and high needs. The people who are lower risk still account for significant bed days, and shouldn't be ignored.

#### **IV. Updates from Tri-Branch Task Force members**

Rob Hofmann: Distributed graph comparing population, crimes, convictions, and incarcerations. Incarcerations have increased by 150% over the past 20 years even though the number of crimes have plateaued. The trajectory, however, have halted. There was a risk aversion within the system that was due to a fear of potential ramifications of the releasing of people who might be of higher risk.

Patrick Flood: The Challenges for Change bids all dealt with the people who have severe functional impairments and all will implement performance based measures. In the bids, they include addressing systems for assessing risk, evidence-based practices, and services along the sequential intercept.

Karen Gennette: The Judiciary received four proposals from the Challenges for Change RFP and a meeting is scheduled with the possible grantee next week for further clarification.

#### **V. Next Steps for the Tri-Branch Task Force**

New Grant: DMH and the Judiciary are in the planning process of submitting another BJA Justice and Mental Health Collaboration grant that would focus on implementing a criminal-justice capable training program statewide. There are also other local communities who are applying for the grant and are looking at ways to collaborate with their proposals.

Meeting dates for 2011: March 31, June 23, September 22, December 15

The Task Force adjourned at 11:45am.

**Next meeting is scheduled for March 31, 2011.**