

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

June 9, 2008

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Honorable James M. Mize, Presiding Judge and Criminal Justice Cabinet Chair
Honorable Jaime R. Roman, Mental Health Court Judge

Subject: Progress Report - Sacramento Mental Health Court –
Cost Avoidance to the County Justice System

Supervisor(s): ALL

Contact: Judge Jaime R. Roman, Mental Health Court Judge
Lynn Wynn, Principal Administrative Analyst
Jaime Collins, Mental Health Court Coordinator

Overview

The Board of Supervisors respectfully requested a report back on the Sacramento Mental Health Court program to specifically address cost avoidance issues to the county and the justice system.

Measures/Evaluation

The Criminal Justice Cabinet allocated \$20,000 in funding to the Sacramento County Mental Health Division to conduct formal evaluations of the Mental Health Court Program. The First Year Report is attached to this letter and includes data from February 2007 to February 2008. The cost of the first evaluation is \$5, 143.

BACKGROUND

The Sacramento Mental Health Court program is a collaborative, interdisciplinary team, and includes the Sacramento Superior Court and the following Sacramento County Departments: Office of the Sheriff (Jail Psychiatric Services), Probation, District Attorney, Public Defender and Department of Health and Human Services Division of Mental Health (DHHS-DMH). The target population is incarcerated criminal offenders utilizing Jail Psychiatric Services with a goal of twenty-five defendants participating in the pilot program.

During Final Budget Hearings on September 14, 2006, the Board approved the concept of the Mental Health Court Pilot Program, funding the Department of Health and Human Services and Probation in the amounts of \$192,470 and \$102,465 respectively. The Board requested a report back prior to the expenditure of any General Fund appropriations on the pilot program.

On January 23, 2007 the Sacramento Superior Court conducted a workshop to address the Board's concerns. During mid-year budget hearings on January 31, 2007 the Board approved the expenditure of the General Fund appropriations and the creation of a new position with the Probation Department.

On February 14, 2007, the Mental Health Court Pilot Program was implemented.

On September 13, 2007, the Board received a report back on the preliminary results of the program for each of the member departments.

Additionally, on November 6, 2007, by Resolution Nos. 2007-1298, 1299, 1300 and 1301, the Board authorized the Sheriff to accept grant funds of \$766,896 for the State Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR), approved the addition of four limited term positions to the Sheriff and Probation Departments, enter into contracts with Elk Grove Adult and Community Education, Change Counseling and Man Alive, add three vehicles to the Sheriff and Probation fleets and to solicit bids for services.

Both programs are supported by the Criminal Justice Cabinet (Cabinet).

DISCUSSION

The Sacramento Mental Health Court (SMHC) began serving clients in February 2007. SMHC is held every Tuesday afternoon in Department 9 with the SMHC support team from the member departments. The program has received a total of 135 referrals since February. Between February 2007 and February 2008, there were sixteen defendants participating in the program. This is the population included in the first year evaluation report. Since February 2008, an additional nine defendants were added to the program and at one point the program was operative with twenty-five defendants (the targeted population for the SMHC). To date, two defendants have successfully graduated from the program and three additional graduates are scheduled for June 24, 2008.

With regard to the new MIOCR grant, effective December 3, 2007, the Sheriff went into grant award status with the California Corrections Standard Authority. Below is a list of accomplishments to date:

- In January 2007 they began staffing to begin the six month implementation period.
- Probation dedicated a Supervising Probation Officer from January to June 2007 to set up protocols for the program. Grant funds have reimbursed Probation \$60,379 for the employee, car, and radio. Probation is providing one senior probation officer for the program.
- Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) dedicated staff to provide program management.
- .5 EGUSD was funded through MIOCR funds and the other .5 was paid from other sources.
- The program director was hired in November 2007.
- A dedicated deputy has been hired under the MIOCR grant and the Sheriff's Sergeant is funded through other in-kind sources.
- Strategies for Change (a local non-profit organization) received the contract to provide the mentally ill treatment services.

- Work Release Division Center for Corrections Alternative Programs (CCAP), of which MIOCR is under, provides psychiatric services, group therapy, one-on-one services through an advocate and re-entry specialists. The mentally ill offenders are also receiving services for co-occurring disorders, GED and art therapy.
- On February 19, 2008, MIOCR opened its doors to accepting referrals from SMHC. There are currently 5 defendants enrolled.

MEASURES/EVALUATION

Attached for the Board's review is the First Year Evaluation Report prepared by the Sacramento Mental Health Division. The report includes a formal evaluation of the sixteen enrolled defendants in the SMHC program. The highlights from the report include the following:

- Arrest rates decreased by 80% since enrolling in the program;
- Number of days of incarceration decreased by 93.6%.

The report also describes cost savings and cost avoidance for the county and justice system. The sixteen defendants saved the system \$6,000 per client or \$96,000 per year. This cost savings considers the \$300,000 approved by the board to fund the SMHC program. Additionally, this same subset of criminal offenders had they not been involved in the SMHC would have cost the county seven and one half times more money than expended in the pilot program.

Please refer to the attached report for further details about the success of the SMHC program.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Since the SMHC county funding has been targeted for reduction in the FY 08-09 budget, the program will lose the two Peer Advocates and the Senior Probation Officer. The justice partners have met to discuss ways to continue operating the program. Effective, July 1, 2008, the remaining 17 defendants will have their services augmented by the MIOCR program. This will enable these defendants to complete their 12-month program with probation supervision. The remainder of the SMHC costs has been provided by in-kind support and will continue by the Court, Sheriff, District Attorney and Public Defender. The MIOCR program will continue to receive new defendants and is expected to service an additional 13 participants (total of 35) through the end of the current MIOCR funding cycle which ends September 2008. The Sheriff will again pursue MIOCR funding to support the efforts under way this fiscal year.

FINAL COMMENTS

The Criminal Justice Cabinet and justice stakeholders believed that cost savings would be realized by the county as a direct result from the SMHC program. As reflected in the evaluation, the county has realized considerable savings already. The real cost avoidance equates to decreased jail services and bed space by the defendants in the program. The most positive outcome from the program is that it assists defendants to living stable lives in our community. This stabilization is expected to reduce the likelihood of incarceration and save the county

additional money. As reported in the January 2007 workshop, those jurisdictions who continue to operate a MHC program report annual savings to the county along with a proven record of sustainability and valuable cost avoidance realities. The Criminal Justice Cabinet will continue to seek funding opportunities to support this vital program.

We appreciate the Board for authorizing the pilot funding in FY 2007-08 that supported the implementation of the SMHC program. The Cabinet is convinced that the program is both cost effective and a long term solution that every jurisdiction should implement.

Respectfully Submitted.

attachment