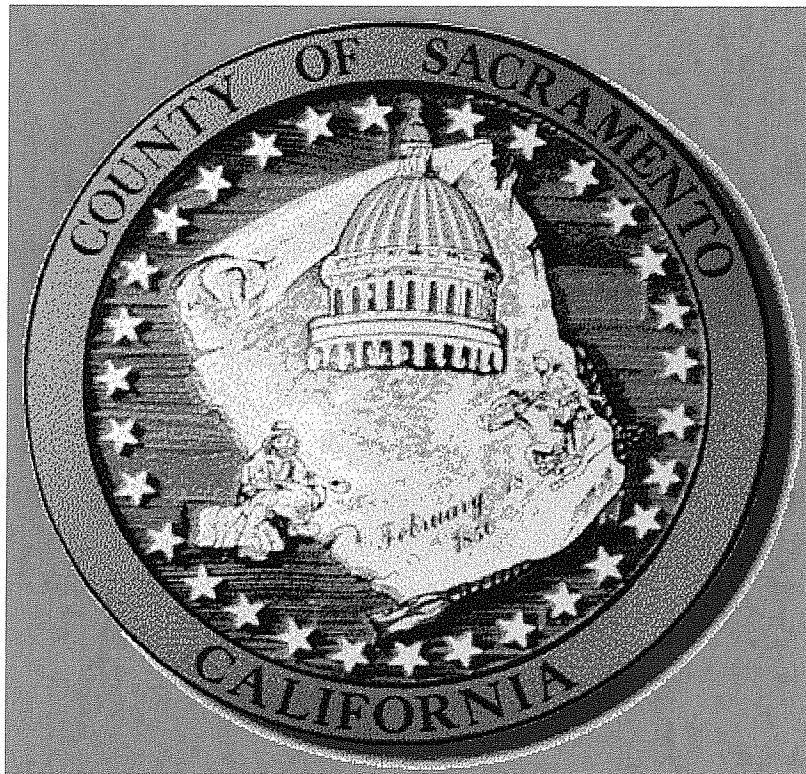

**Sacramento County Mental Health Court: First Year of Operation
February 2007 to February 2008**



**Division of Mental Health
Research, Evaluation, and Performance Outcomes**

May 2008

Executive Summary

From February 14, 2007 to February 13, 2008, the Sacramento County Mental Health Court (MHC) enrolled 16 clients. As of February 14, 2008:

- One client (6%) successfully graduated from the program after one year
- Twelve clients (75%) continue to receive services
- One client (6%) immediately entered a locked psychiatric facility and remains there
- One client (6%) was discharged due to physical limitations from a car accident
- One client (6%) was discharged due to inability to comply with the terms of probation

During their time in MHC, clients showed decreased jail and psychiatric hospital utilization. Specifically, compared to the year prior to enrollment,

- The number of people arrested decreased by 80%
- The total number of arrests decreased by 74.1%
- The number of days incarcerated decreased by 93.6%
- The number of people using the crisis unit decreased by 33.7%
- The number of people admitted to an inpatient psychiatric facility decreased by 50%
- The total number of inpatient admissions to a psychiatric facility decreased by 33.3%
- The number of days in an inpatient psychiatric facility decreased by 25%

The data indicate that the MHC clients cost more than ¼ million dollars in the year prior to enrolling in MHC. These same clients cost the system only \$33,000 since enrolling in MHC – an 88% decrease in cost.

When the expenditures associated with the program are taken into account, does the system still show cost savings? The data suggests that it does. In fact, it appears that over \$93,000 would be saved over the course of the year, which equates to over \$6,000 per client.

Overall, the Sacramento County Mental Health Court has been successful in reducing recidivism to the jail and the number of days clients are hospitalized for a psychiatric condition. These program impacts translate to a significant reduction in cost to the criminal justice system, an overall reduction in cost to Sacramento County as a whole, and an improved quality of life for the clients enrolled.

Sacramento County Mental Health Court: First Year of Operation

Sacramento County Mental Health Court became operational February 14, 2007. In the first year of operation, the Mental Health Court (MHC) enrolled 16 individuals. This report presents data on 15 of the 16 clients enrolled. The remaining client left the jail and was hospitalized 5 days later; she has yet to be released from a locked facility and therefore is not included in this analysis.

The data presented below were obtained from a variety of sources, including: Jail Psychiatric Services, Probation reports, Sacramento County Court/Sheriff information system (JIMS); and the Mental Health Client Activity Tracking System (CATS).

Demographics

The table below depicts the demographic characteristics of the clients enrolled in the MHC.

	Number (N=15)	Percent
Age	Average 31.9 (Range, 19-54)	
Gender		
Male	10	66.7
Female	5	33.3
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian	3	20.0
African American	7	46.7
Hispanic	3	20.0
Other	1	6.7
Unknown/Not Reported	1	6.7
Primary Axis I Diagnosis		
Psychotic	8	53.3
Bipolar	7	46.7
Substance Use Diagnosis?		
Yes	6	40.0
No	9	60.0
Length of Time in MHC as of 2/13/08	Average=3.9 Months (Range, 0.3-12.1 Months)	

Arrests and Incarcerations

The table below shows information about arrests and incarcerations that happened the year before enrolling in MHC versus after enrollment. All three indicators show dramatic decreases.

	Year Prior to Enrollment	After Enrollment	Percent Decrease
People Arrested	15	3	80.0
Total Arrests	27	7	74.1
Total Incarceration Days	1,020	65	93.6

Acute Psychiatric Services

The table below shows information about utilization of the psychiatric Crisis Unit and Inpatient hospitalizations that happened the year before enrolling in MHC versus after enrollment. Here, 4 of 5 indicators show decreases.

	Prior	After	Percent Decrease
Crisis Unit			
Unduplicated Clients	3	1	66.7
Total Crisis Visits	5	5	0.0
Inpatient Hospitalization			
Unduplicated Clients	2	1	50.0
Total Hospitalizations	3	2	33.3
Total Hospital Days	8	6	25.0

Jail Psychiatric Services

The table below shows information about utilization of the inpatient psychiatric services in the Jail the year before enrolling in MHC versus after enrollment. Here, the number of days hospitalized decreased.

	Prior	After	Percent Decrease
Jail Inpatient			
Unduplicated Clients	1	1	0.0
Total Hospitalizations	1	2	(100.0)
Total Hospital Days	13	4	69.2

() indicates an increase

System Costs

The clients who utilized MHC services are costly to the County system. The table below illustrates that, using only the data reported above, these 15 clients had cost more than ¼ million dollars in the year prior to enrolling in MHC. The table also illustrates that these same 15 clients have cost the system only \$33,000 since they enrolled in MHC – an 88% decrease in cost.

	Cost per Day/Episode	Year Prior to Enrollment		After Enrollment	
		# Days/Episodes	Total Cost	# Days/Episodes	Total Cost
Jail Days	\$250/day	1020	\$255,000	65	\$16,250
Jail Inpatient	\$550/day	13	\$7,150	4	\$2,200
Crisis Services	\$2,185/episode	5	\$10,925	5	\$10,925
Psychiatric Inpatient	\$550/day	8	\$4,400	6	\$3,300
Total			\$277,475		\$32,675

Cost Savings

Although the program clearly decreases the system costs associated with the clients who enroll, when the expenditures associated with the program are taken into account, does the system still show cost savings? The data in the table below suggests that it does (see the notes below regarding assumption of this analysis). In fact, it appears that slightly more than \$93,000 would be saved over the course of the year. This equates to \$6,267 per client. Moreover, the quality of life for these clients has been greatly enriched.

Client Costs		Cost per Day/Episode	After Enrollment (Annualized)	
			# Days/Episodes	Total Cost
	Jail Days	\$250/day	201.5	\$50,375
	Jail Inpatient	\$550/day	12.5	\$6,875
	Crisis Services	\$2,185/episode	15.5	\$33,868
	Psychiatric Inpatient	\$550/day	18.6	\$10,230
			Total	\$101,348 (A)
Program Costs	DHHS Budget			\$192,470
	Probation Budget			\$102,465
			Total	\$294,935 (B)
Cost Avoidance	Jail Days Avoided (suspended sentences)	\$250/day	1,960	\$490,000 (C)
Total (A+B-C)				\$93,717

Assumptions:

1. Client days/episodes have been annualized to adjust for the fact that the average length of stay was 3.9 months. Therefore the data represent the number of days/episodes that would have occurred if everyone had been in the MHC for 12 months.
2. The General Fund Dollars approved by the Board for DHHS and Probation have been used to reflect program costs. All of the funds were not spent, due to the start up period. However, the Public Defender, District Attorney, Sheriff's Department and Courts all provided in-kind services that haven't been taken into account. It is difficult to quantify what those services would have cost, however, that would be different from the costs associated with "business as usual" (i.e., the client's normal path through the justice system).

Conclusion

The data presented in this report suggest that the Sacramento County Mental Health Court has been extremely successful in reducing recidivism to the jail, as well as in reducing the number of days clients are hospitalized for a psychiatric condition. These program impacts translate to a significant reduction in cost to the criminal justice system, an overall reduction in cost to Sacramento County as a whole, and an improved quality of life for the clients enrolled.