

External Advisory Group Meeting—March 3, 2015

- 1. Have you looked at the model used by the Women’s Prison Association in NYC for a transition model for women? The WPA is the oldest advocacy in the country for women.**

All successful programs use interventions and best practices that have been proven to be effective through research. Dutchess County employs evidence-based practices in the criminal justice system and will be able to expand these practices upon the return of the housed out inmates. WPA works with women transitioning from both jails and prison while the Dutchess County Jail, which is not a prison, houses pretrial and sentenced inmates who serve various lengths of stay from one day to up to one year. Their transition back to the community is very different from those returning from state or federal prisons.

Dutchess County has several gender-specific programs available for women.

- The Women’s Reporting Center, which opened in early 2014, provides a variety of evidence-based case management programs for justice involved women, including cognitive behavioral intervention, employment development programming, housing assistance and other services. Project MORE, in partnership with the Office of Probation and Community Corrections, provides services in a community-based setting.*
- The Office of Probation is engaged in a technical assistance grant with the Center for Effective Public Policy and the National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women. The focus of the project is to develop and validate a needs inventory for women at the pretrial stage. Research from this project will be used to assist other jurisdictions nationally.*
- Staff from Project MORE and the Office of Probation have received training for certification to train in the use of the Women’s Risk and Needs Assessment (WRNA) instrument. In the near future, Dutchess County will host trainings for our own staff as well as neighboring counties.*
- Shortly after the housed out inmates return to the county, an intensive evidenced-based program will begin for women and men at the Dutchess County Jail, including classes targeted for women designed to address their needs. This program will be in addition to the services already available.*

- 2. Currently, approximately 20% of the inmate population is receiving in-jail programs. How much will that percentage increase?**

Currently less than half of inmates do not have access to in-jail programs, since they are housed outside of the county. All inmates at the Dutchess County Jail are eligible to receive services according to their individual needs. A jail-based team from the Department of Mental Hygiene, as well as other staff and community organizations provide in-jail and transition services. These services will also become available to the housed out inmates upon their return. In addition, intensive programming will be available to the higher risk inmates when the PODS are fully operational. However, it should be remembered that participation in programs is voluntary.

- 3. What are the reasons for choosing to place those who are very troubled by addictions and/or mental health and/or homelessness in a jail setting?**

People are remanded to jail after being arrested for a criminal offense. A judge determines whether to remand an individual to the jail following arraignment. A person may also be sentenced to incarceration following conviction of an offense.

- 4. Rather than waiting until a homeless person does something that causes him/her to get into trouble with the law, why not provide safe, affordable housing?**

Safe, affordable housing is being addressed by several groups and coalitions in the community. Criminal behavior is caused by many factors and the county uses assessment instruments to determine both risk to reoffend as well as the criminogenic factors that need to be addressed to reduce that risk.

- 5. Why aren't the cops giving out more appearance tickets on misdemeanors?**

Law enforcement officers issue many appearance tickets, but must determine the appropriate action to take based on the individual circumstances of each case. Misdemeanors include such offenses as: DWI, domestic violence, assault, aggravated harassment, menacing, arson, forgery, stalking, criminal possession of a weapon, criminal mischief, sexual assault, larcenies and drug possession and sale. The bottom line is law enforcement makes the final decision.

6. Why are the judges putting people in jail (taking up cells) on petty crimes?

Judges set bail according to the individual circumstances of the case and follow Article 510 of the Criminal Procedure Law in determining bail.

7. Why are people's bails amounts so high?

Judges apply Article 510 of the Criminal Procedure Law in the determination of Recognizance, Bail and Commitment.

8. Who are these programs for? First time or repeat offenders?

Programs are available based on an individual's risk and needs as well as court order. Accordingly, they may be used for first time or repeat offenders.

9. How many repeat offenders are violent are in Dutchess County custody?

Different criteria may be used in determining whether an individual is violent. For example, the offense itself may be violent or the individual may subsequently exhibit violent behaviors once in custody. Therefore, the information to answer this question is not available.

10. Who will be housed in PODS? Minimum security?

Inmates classified as Minimum to Medium security may be housed in the temporary housing units.

11. Is there gonna be a fence around PODS?

New York State Commission of Correction requires a perimeter fence to encompass the temporary housing units.

12. Have you asked the inmates how they feel? What they want/need? What's good for them?

We have ex-offenders involved in our transition programs and other behavioral oriented activities, as well as similar representatives in the community organizations we are partnering with. The programs we are using are evidence based-which means they have

documented outcomes from other areas that indicate their success with inmate populations.

13. What can be done to get DCFS to help with medicine, housing and treatment on the day of release?

Individuals may receive health benefits (Medicaid) and food stamps on the day of release. They must go to DCFS and apply and this will require them to have appropriate identification and documentation. Currently, there are transition resources at the jail to help them to be prepared. Safety Net benefits are available immediately to those with families-provided the family as a whole qualifies. Single individuals have a 45 day wait for Safety Net services.

14. How can we incentivize lawyers to get their clients to trial more quickly—the “rocket docket.”

Criminal justice processing is being reviewed at the present time. It is believed that housing out has slowed the system down considerably. Once the inmates have returned, we will be able to determine the influence and effect of housing out and what other initiatives may be undertaken without compromising due process. However, once again we can only make recommendations. The judiciary is a separate branch of government and make the decisions about how individuals are dealt with in court.

15. Regarding mental health services—When the PODS are fully populated, will the number of mental health workers in the jail be increased?

We will have additional hours for the social workers and psychiatrist at the jail. We will also continue to have Jail based mental hygiene personnel assigned at the jail.

16. Regarding the PODS—It was mentioned that the PODS housing will be dorm style. Does this mean that 50 people will be in one room with no separation?

A dormitory is a housing unit where there are specific requirements to meet the needs of the population being housed there. Examples of this would be the number of square feet allotted for each person, number of toilets, sinks and showers for the population, the amount of natural light and the amount of dayroom space for activities and meals. There is also a multipurpose room for medical consultations and programs.

Dormitory housing settings are common across the United States. The NYS Commission of Correction allows 20% of inmates to be housed dormitory style. Dormitory style housing is less expensive to build and operate, and requires less corrections officers in terms of supervision. The concept of the dormitory style is to create an environment that is less restrictive, providing more freedom for the lower risk individuals housed in this setting.

17. Is the County committed to following the Bexar County model, or is it a vague “ideal” that we aspire to? If committed, what specifically is being planned to provide diversion services—to place people in a seamless, holistic treatment process?

The county is committed to implementing a Restoration Center, based on the Bexar County model, but adapted to local needs. Leon Evans, founder of the Bexar County program, cautions against trying to replicate their model without considering local resources and needs. Further, Dutchess County has many more resources in place than Bexar County had when they started. We will use resources including our extensive ATIs, Crisis Helpline, Mobile Crisis Intervention team, Partial Hospital service and the Jail based forensic evaluation and mental hygiene team.

18. Is a Housing First model being considered?

The Housing Consortium, with their 10 year plan to end homelessness has discussed and is considering how this might be made available.

19. New York State government closed Hudson River Psychiatric Hospital and potentially released mental health needy individuals out into our county community. Why can't we request financial relief from the state to provide a needed solution?

We have and we are receiving some financial assistance from the state...in the amount of \$5.2 million.

20. How often are the members of law enforcement, e.g. police, corrections officers, required to complete training for crisis intervention for the mentally ill?

Historically, there has not been a significant amount of Crisis Intervention training for law enforcement. We are helping to change that. Law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies receive a variety of training in crisis intervention and related topics.

Most recently, the county has committed to assisting law enforcement agencies to provide crisis intervention training to all personnel. Specifically we are:

- *Planning to provide training to all law enforcement personnel in Dutchess County the 8 hour Mental Health First Aid program over a 12 month period.*
- *Begin a multi-year program to train all law enforcement personnel in the 40 hour crisis intervention training program.*
- *Add the 40 hour CIT to the 5 training academies in this area.*
- *Dutchess County Government will assist with the funding for training and help agencies defray the cost of having officers out of the field.*

21. How often are these same staff members required to review or retrain for crisis intervention for the mentally ill?

This may vary from agency to agency, but follow up training on any topic is routinely provided.

22. a. Please provide specifics on the Crisis Intervention Team Training - namely the number of hours of the training (will it be 40 hours?), the number of officers to be trained this year, and the rollout plan (when will the training begin, who is doing the training, what is the certification for those doing the training.)

b. Please provide the specifics on the intervention center - the number of individuals it will be prepared to serve, the rollout plan, the hours of operation, the number of staff operating the center, and the impact on any existing mental health programs.

c. How will County Executive Molinaro's commitment in the State of the County message to implement CIT and an intervention center be factored into the plans for the new Transition Center? Specifically, how will the projection for the number of beds be determined in light of the almost 50% reduction of required beds in Bexar County as cited by the County Executive in his talk?

The SOTC is an opportunity to lay out the vision for the coming year and share with the public the initiatives being crafted and developed. Many of these are still in development and specific details are not yet available. As the initiatives are rolled out over the coming year, those specific details will be made available.

Regarding your questions regarding the training and related costs, there are still details that need to be worked out. The 40 hour training program (CIT) runs about \$10,000

which includes 2 trainers and their expenses. The number of sessions needed will be determined after finalizing a training schedule with the law enforcement agencies. Several of them have already begun training their personnel at regional training programs. We are currently reviewing various CIT trainers, but have not made a final decision as of yet.

The 8 hour Mental Health First Aid training is something we can offer inhouse, as we have several individuals certified to provide that training. The overall training schedule will include this as well.

Regarding your questions about the Restoration Center, it will be located on North Road in the current Mental Hygiene facility, utilizing space that will be vacated by the current tenant this summer. A capital project is already planned to address some maintenance issues, and this will be expanded to include the necessary build out and the moving around of several groups, both County and non-county, to make the overall facility more functional. It will allow for the combining of the Mobile Crisis Intervention team, the Partial Hospital unit and HELPLINE in the same area, which we feel will enhance our ability to respond to people with mental issues seeking/needing professional help. We have just created the CJC Diversion Committee, headed up by Steve Miccio from PEOPLE Inc. and they have been tasked with developing both the training and Restoration Center plans. It is premature to provide greater specifics at this time.

We are excited about the potential of these efforts and the SOTC was an excellent opportunity to let the public know the efforts we are initiating. However, there is much that still needs to be accomplished. Additionally, we are pursuing funding opportunities from several sources to help limit the cost to taxpayers.

Regarding your questions about the CIT and the Restoration Center and its impact to our Jail census, we do not envision the same percentage as Bexar County. Dutchess County has a much more comprehensive system for ATIs and pre trial screening than Bexar County did when they started their Center. Additionally, the Mobile Crisis Intervention team has intervened in thousands of cases already. We do think this will help in additional cases and the services we provide will be valuable to the community.