

# Dutchess County Special Populations Work Group Meeting

February 29, 2016

Key Agenda Items and Information:

The following was the agenda for the meeting:

## Agenda:

- Approval of January minutes
- Reschedule of March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting
- Updates on RESTART program
- Software update
- Second Chance Grant application
- Update on jail planning

## Present:

Ronald Knapp, Chair, City of Poughkeepsie  
Bill Eckert, DBCH Jail-Based Services  
George Krom, DCJ  
Dair Melendez-Drier, Lexington  
Margaret Hirst, DBCH  
Kevin M. Hazucha, HVMH  
Bill Grady, District Attorney  
Tom Angell, Public Defender  
Martin Lynch, Project MORE  
Mark Sasvary, HVMH  
Noel Knille, DC DPW  
Shirley A. Adams, CSCC  
Mary Ellen Still, Probation and Community Corrections  
Lt. Winnie Milkovich, DCJ  
Sam Busselle, Citizen  
Kevin Warwick, Consultant, ASA  
Dawn Hawley, Acting Coordinator

1. **Approval of minutes** - Minutes of January 11<sup>th</sup> were prepared and will be sent out for review and approval. If there are no modifications, they will be placed on the website.
2. **Reschedule March meeting** – the next meeting of the Special Populations Work Group will be on April 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m.

**3. Updates on RESTART program** - Bill Eckert reported that staff completed two intensive trainings in February. One was MRT, which is part of our core curriculum, and all staff are now trained in MRT. There will be more groups added soon. The other training was Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). RESTART clinicians have been trained in the DBT skills. This was a very useful training as well. Sam asked for an explanation of DBT. Bill explained that it is a type of cognitive behavioral therapy that teaches skills to cope with stress and to improve relationships with others. It is a very detailed, specific form of training. Kevin added that DBT works very well with our model.

Dair Melendez-Drier was asked about current programs at Lexington. Dair advised that they are doing MRT for females and males as well as Seeking Safety. They have services for bilingual clients. People can be seen immediately at Page Park if necessary.

**4. Software updates** – Bill reported that the North Pointe COMPAS software was installed. Staff are becoming familiar with it and building a data base. Kevin added that this will allow us to get data on assessments as well as post release information. It will help us to determine how inmates transition back into the community, who gets jobs, what services they get in the community etc. Sam asked if Marty (Project MORE) was using the same software and Marty indicated that the same software is used throughout the system. Margaret asked if Bill has been able to institute the authorization for program evaluation. Bill said they are currently working on it.

Kevin added that it is very positive to have all agencies working together with evidence-based programming. The same programming will be available no matter where the person is in the system. Adding DBT is an advanced component and a strength-based approach that really works with our population. Tom asked about the number of participants in MRT and Bill indicated there are currently about 17, but that number will increase now that all staff has been trained. Kevin added that we have accomplished a great deal quickly while maintaining fidelity to our model.

**5. RE-ENTRY** - Tom Angell shared that the reentry groups are talking about employment opportunities. There are grant opportunities coming up. Marty said they are exploring how some of these opportunities might be utilized. Noel asked if they are looking into a potential partnership with the Culinary Institute and purchasing the diner across the street from where the new Sheriff's Office will be located. Marty said they have not reached that level of detail yet, but that particular property is no longer available. Mary Ellen explained that the Women's Committee of the CJC looked into the diner as a potential site to develop, but it is not available. However, there are some other properties that might have potential. This is very preliminary. Mary Ellen added that there is an agency called the Professional Culinary Academy that provides a valuable service in preparing individuals for careers in the culinary field. Graduates receive certificates in various areas and many go on to full-time jobs in the food industry. Probation and other agencies have had a long-term professional relationship with them. There may be an opportunity for expansion; they are already up and running. Marty added that his agency has a wonderful relationship with them as well and some of their participants have worked for Project MORE. Tom and Mary Ellen noted that we need to meet the needs of two types of populations: the first includes people who have work skills and need employment and the second are those who need job readiness skills. The new jail may provide space to pursue work skills.

Mary Ellen said that we need to focus on the ability to maintain jobs as well as to find employment. Ready, Set Work focuses on job readiness. Kevin added that research shows there is a correlation between successful completion of CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) and DBT classes and success in maintaining employment.

George said the current inmate population is 394, with 12 housed out and two in a psychiatric center. Having fewer people housed out is helping to decrease the number of unsentenced individuals in the jail. It was emphasized that RESTART was designed for higher risk individuals who will remain in the jail for a period of time. The importance of successful transitioning from jail to the community is critical in order to reduce recidivism and have successful outcomes.

Sam asked for an update on the action plan in the CJC Needs Assessment. Kevin and Mary Ellen noted that the work of the Special Populations Work Group was the result of recommendations contained in the plan, but not all elements of the plan relate to special populations and are therefore being addressed by various committees. Kevin said that the goals for special populations were distributed to the work group at our initial meeting and that formed the basis for our work plan.

**4. Second Chance Grant** - we are working on the application. The goal is to fill our identified needs by providing more support for people transitioning to the community and for women. We would like to be sure people successfully transition into clinical services, employment etc. The model we have in this county supports the model the grant funders are looking to support. It is a competitive three year grant that will give us the opportunity to expand community-based programming and enhance our model. This application is due March 30<sup>th</sup>. There is a total of up to \$650,000 over three years. Kevin thinks we have a good chance of being awarded the grant due to the innovative program model and jail planning in Dutchess County. Kevin noted that there has been an extraordinary amount accomplished in this county over the last two years. Sam asked if there was money in the Second Chance grant for prevention. Kevin said that this particular grant does not include prevention; it is targeted to a different population. Tom Angell said the county is proposing to spend a half million dollars on a prevention study.

**5. Stabilization Center** – Margaret said the Stabilization Center is coming along well; they are meeting weekly. The design has been created and will be reviewed with Noel (DPW) in about a month. Our program plan is being reviewed by OASAS. Tom said his understanding is that the project will be built incrementally, with CIT training coming first, so officers understand who may be appropriate for the center. The unit may provide services for up to 23 hours so transitional planning is crucial.

**6. Update on DCJTC planning** - The RFP has been issued and proposals are due March 9<sup>th</sup>. Since we will build the Sheriff's Office first, there will be time to evaluate space needs before work begins on the JTC.

A motion to adjourn was made by Tom Angell at 11:55 a.m.