

SPECIAL POPULATIONS MEETING MINUTES

MAY 18, 2015

Present: Kevin Warwick, Onaje Benjamin, Bill Grady, Sam Busselle, Tom Angell, Bill Eckert, Mary Ellen Still, Marty Lynch, Shirley Adams, Steve Miccio, Jon Heller, Noel Knille, Dr. Kari Rieber and Gary Christensen

Kevin called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

1. Andrew O'Grady, Executive Director of Mental Health America of Dutchess County made a presentation to the committee. He urged the committee to consider providing information to inmates who were not going to attend the Restart program with the goal of encouraging them to voluntarily seek treatment upon release. Mr. O'Grady indicated he was pleased with the Restart program, but wanted to reach the inmates who were not going to participate in Restart. The committee received the suggestion favorably. At present, there are services and programs available to inmates and this could potentially be expanded. There are classification and security issues to consider when volunteers come into the facility. Bill Eckert offered to meet with Andrew to review current services and discuss options for the future.
2. Review of program schedule—the draft of the schedule is almost complete. There is a work flow meeting today. The core program is Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT); with other programs supporting it. Kevin noted that the work has been completed very quickly and efficiently and, most importantly, it is well planned and evidence-based.
3. Update on software—there are several products being reviewed. A subcommittee, which includes a representative from OCIS, is working on the selection process. A meeting will be held immediately following the Special Populations meeting.
4. Update on program flow process—the general flow will involve assessment-programming-transition-community based programming. There are still details to work out, but the planning is progressing.
5. Women's program schedule update—a meeting to discuss women's programming is scheduled for next Tuesday.
6. Q & A—How can the MacArthur Foundation grant and its focus on average length of stay (ALOS) be addressed by the committee? After discussion, the consensus was that ALOS was being addressed in other committees and was not the mission or goal of Special Populations. This committee needed to work on its goals and timelines, but could benefit from the work being done elsewhere on ALOS. The committee's goals are outlined by contract. We will review the forensic process as it addresses the needs of special populations.
How can we justify an expansion to 578 beds when everything has not yet been tried to lower the inmate population? Responses included: a design has to be determined on what you know, not predictions that cannot be substantiated, beds can be decommissioned and repurposed if the inmate population decreases, we already have a low incarceration rate compared to other jurisdictions and the programs put into place will take time to have an impact.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.