

DPCA

NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, 2004

Shared Services

*Alternatives to Incarceration for
Defendants and Offenders with Mental Illness*



*Programs
providing
alternatives
for those in
need . . .*



The New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) has partnered with state and local agencies to develop and fund specialized programs for those individuals involved in the criminal justice system who have serious and persistent mental illnesses. At DPCA, we strive to promote public safety and provide programs that will assist in reducing recidivism. The following are examples of a very cost effective partnership that can accomplish both . . .

Dear Colleagues:

According to a report to Congress in 2000, 25% to 50% of all Americans with mental illness will at some point in their lives become entangled in the criminal justice system. Too often in the past mental illness has not been identified as an important issue in working with offenders in the community. Public perception connects violence and mental illness. However, the MacArthur Community Violence Study concluded that the prevalence of violent behavior by individuals with serious mental illness is about the same as for the general population when not combined with substance abuse. In the world of working with the criminally accused or convicted population, quite frequently there are co-occurring conditions.

In the past five years the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) has made great strides in developing tools to assist the probation and community corrections workforce in identifying individuals with mental illness. DPCA has worked with the New York State Office of Mental Health to enhance COMPAS, an adult risk and needs assessment tool, through the addition of several targeted questions flagging mental illness. YASI, a youth assessment and screening instrument, is being widely used by probation departments across the state. DPCA is promoting that V-DISC, a self-administered diagnostic tool, be used in combination with YASI to identify youth at high risk for psychiatric conditions, including suicide. DPCA also contracted for the development of a computer disk entitled *The Signs of Mental Illness Training* that will be distributed to probation departments and to Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs.

The NYS Office of Mental Health Community Adult Forensic Services, in partnership with DPCA, is finalizing a curriculum for supervisors in probation departments and ATI programs in New York State for working with individuals with serious mental illness and a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. The curriculum is being piloted at several locations and promises to advance the expertise of probation officers and their interaction with county and other mental health resources in very significant ways.

In 2002, DPCA initiated five-year agreements under its Services for a Shared Population initiative awarding seven grants, two to NYC based agencies and five upstate county collaborations, led by probation, for specialized mental health services to defendants and offenders with serious mental illness (eligible Axis I diagnosis). To ensure the success of these programs and to model local cooperation, DPCA requested assistance from other state agencies and organizations, and a committee, Services for a Shared Population: Defendants and Offenders with Mental Illness, was formed. This committee includes representatives from the NYS Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled, NYS Office of Mental Health, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, NY Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors, Inc., and The Council of Probation Administrators.

In continuation of our intent in this area, with funding provided by the NYS Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled, DPCA with assistance from Rensselaer County recently arranged professional evaluation of the Shared Population programs to identify strategies to be used in implementing programs for individuals with mental illness, under the supervision of criminal justice, by other jurisdictions across the state. We look forward to continued collaboration at the state and local levels to reduce recidivism and to provide additional programs and services that will help individuals with mental illness receive proper treatment and reenter the community.

Sincerely,

Sara Tullar Fasoldt
State Director

SHARED SERVICES:

Alternatives to Incarceration Programs for Defendants and Offenders with Mental Illness

The Albany County Rapid Assessment, Intervention and Linkage Program combines the talents of the Albany County Probation Department with the Rehabilitation Support Services, Inc. The program provides placement and case management that coordinates services and monitors community-based conditions of release for females who have an Axis I mental health diagnosis and are under probation supervision. The case management service links individuals with available mental health resources and in collaboration with probation works to ensure that participants follow through with treatment. General mental health training for probation officers, as well as crisis intervention services, are also provided.

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Cattaraugus County Safe Communities/Safe Futures has an intensive probation program that is operated in conjunction with the Cattaraugus County Community Services Department's Forensic Continuing Day Treatment Program. This program operates as a day reporting center for those probationers in need of such services and provides intensive supervision. Areas addressed in this collaborative effort include treatment, medication, compliance, substance abuse, education and employment, homelessness and life skills. Particular emphasis is placed on working with individuals who are currently incarcerated or who are at high risk of incarceration with serious mental illnesses.

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Erie County Shared Population is using an integrated service approach with the defendants and offenders with mental illness supervised by Erie County Probation in this community working with Erie County Department of Mental Health, Forensic Mental Health and Horizon Health Services, Inc. The model features the utilization of a therapeutic team review of defendants at several points in criminal justice processing and cross-training. Intensive case planning and individualized treatment plans are conducted with all enrollees using a person centered approach.

Contact: Charmaine Franklin, M.S, A.D.S 716-858-8075 franklic@erie.gov

Lewis County Transitions to Independence Process (TIP) unit has been developed within the Community Mental Health Center to work with youth (16 to 21 years of age) who have a serious mental illness and are defendants/offenders under the probation department's jurisdiction. TIP is a promising evidenced-based intervention that focuses on four primary domains: employment, education, housing and community life adjustment. The Program Coordinator assists participants in obtaining/stabilizing resources related to these categories, including linkage to services, monitoring and transportation as necessary. Program effectiveness is enhanced by using a variety of other existing community services.

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Madison County Forensic Case Management Program was jointly developed by Madison County Probation and Mental Health Departments. In June 2003, Central New York Services, Inc. was contracted to provide an employee who serves as the Forensic Case Manager, located in the Mental Health Department. That person works with Probation, Mental Health and BOCES in developing shared services plans for program participants. The program also assists in applying for benefits with the Department of Social Services and other appropriate services such as vocational and educational services.

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SHARED SERVICES:

Alternatives to Incarceration Programs for Defendants and Offenders with Mental Illness

The Bronx Mental Health Diversion Services operated by the Education and Assistance Corporation (EAC) has been providing screening, assessment, treatment planning, placement and case management each year, since July 2001, for 100 or more seriously mentally ill offenders with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. This project has enhanced the Bronx Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) alternative to incarceration service for prison-bound, substance abusing offenders, including the District Attorney's Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison Program, for defendants with serious and persistent mental illness. The program model builds upon the current TASC model, by adding a multi-disciplinary mental health team to meet the needs of dually-diagnosed offenders and uses a special Supreme Court Mental Health Part to establish treatment diversion orders and to monitor treatment compliance. The unit includes a psychiatrist, psychologist, and specially trained forensic case managers who work together to achieve the best treatment outcomes. With the court, the treatment team determines an accurate diagnosis, performs specialized risk assessments, develops a treatment plan, and monitors and coordinates the care of the identified defendants, throughout their participation in the program.

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The Nathaniel Project, created by the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES) began work under this project in 2002 and provides 24 months of extra-intensive supervision for felon-indicted individuals who are seriously and persistently mentally ill. The program offers comprehensive mental health and integrated substance abuse treatment, rehabilitation, case management, court advocacy and reporting, and monitored linkages to housing and social services. The project effectively links the justice and mental health systems and has a track record of services for this specialized population. The Nathaniel Project was licensed as an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) program by the NYS Office of Mental Health in 2003. The ACT team is a mobile multi-disciplinary staff including a psychiatrist and nurse in addition to social workers, a substance abuse counselor, and a peer specialist who provide intensive treatment services to participants directly in the community.

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**George E. Pataki, Governor
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