

Summary of Forensic Related Initiatives for Counties In the Mayview Regional Service Area Planning Process

The five counties involved with the Mayview Regional Service Area Plan (Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, Lawrence and Washington) are actively involved in providing forensic services for persons with mental illness and/or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders. Working collaboratively with the county jail systems, district courts, and other community providers, the counties have established a wide variety of integrated programs to address the diverse needs of these individuals. These services are designed to coordinate efforts across the criminal justice system, ensuring that individuals have access to the most appropriate and recovery-focused choices as possible while reducing the likelihood of returning to incarceration. The following is a summary of each county's forensic service offerings.

Allegheny

In Allegheny County, the Department of Human Services Office of Behavioral Health offers criminal justice-related services for individuals with a mental illness based on a “sequential intercept model.” This model actively diverts individuals with mental illness from jail and towards treatment options. Examples of diversion programs following this model include a police-based Crisis Intervention Team (pre-arrest diversion), a Mental Health Court and a Drug Court (jail diversion). Allegheny County also runs the Community Re-Integration of Offenders with Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorder (CROMISA) Program, a six-to-nine month voluntary therapeutic community program that provides recovery-oriented services to men with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders who are on probation or on parole. The County also provides case management for individuals with mental illness referred from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to ensure a seamless transition into the community, through the State Forensic Support (Max Out) Program.

Beaver

Forensic supports in Beaver County include jail-based treatment and supports, as well as community programs for individuals once they are released from jail. Upon incarceration, each inmate is screened for any history or current indication of mental health issues. The following is a sample of the jail-based treatment options that are available:

- A standardized assessment given by Gateway Rehabilitation Center to all inmates that are determined to have a history or current indication of mental health or substance abuse issues
- Referrals to treatment options to reduce incarceration lengths
- Evidence-based treatment program for women with co-occurring post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse issues
- Multi-disciplinary teams to plan the inmate's transition back into the community through re-entry programs

Other jail supports include behavioral health training for correctional officers and a Jail Task Force co-facilitated by the warden and the local Mental Health Association Director to make sure the mental health needs of the jail population are being met.

In addition to providing a re-entry liaison to help released individuals transition back into the community, Beaver County also maintains three specialized housing programs for released offenders. These housing programs include a dual diagnosis group home; a Released Offender housing option started with reinvestment funds; and a public housing option available to ex-offenders that participate in a program supported and supervised jointly by Gateway Rehabilitation Center and the Adult Probation Office.

Greene

The Greene County Mental Health Program currently has several initiatives with stakeholders across the county's criminal justice programs. The Greene County Prison and the Probation Department both work closely with the Mental Health Program to address the needs of people with mental illness issues as they arise; the prison also employs a full-time counselor towards this end. The development of a County-wide mental health court is in the preliminary stage, with ongoing dialogue occurring between the Mental Health Administrator, the County Probation Department and the District Attorney's office.

Lawrence

Lawrence County offers a number of services to individuals who are either incarcerated, hospitalized and facing criminal charges, or are current mental health consumers and have had criminal charges filed against them in the past. The County employs a Forensic Liaison to coordinate mental health services across the criminal justice system for these individuals. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Coordinating court-ordered evaluations and treatment
- Working with the courts, forensic units, hospitals, law enforcement and probation officers in assessing the needs of individuals for mental health services and then accessing care for them
- Providing care management functions shortly before the release of people who are incarcerated
- Providing ongoing education and training to the various agencies involved in the criminal justice system as to mental health systems and treatment
- Assisting individuals to transition into other community programs as needed.

In addition to the Forensic Liaison, Lawrence County provides a mobile medication program and case management support for individuals with mental health needs who are, or have been, incarcerated. The County also has on-site assessment/evaluation programs in place for incarcerated persons with mental illness, as well as the ability to provide psychiatric care on an as-needed basis.

Washington

The Washington County MH/MR Program Office serves as the primary link between the county courts and the area's mental health providers for court-ordered mental health evaluations. Upon receipt of a court order, the Program Office works closely with the Adult Probation Office to ensure the appropriate monitoring, evaluating, and reporting occurs. In addition, the County employs a forensic liaison to identify and track newly incarcerated individuals with mental health needs, then monitor their treatment and help plan and coordinate delivery of services to them after they have been released. Washington County also supports a Clinical Liaison to monitor individuals with mental health issues that are currently incarcerated. The Clinical Liaison monitors and assesses the psychiatric services provided to inmates, completes court-ordered evaluations, attends team meetings and maintains records of inmates' behavioral health needs.