

Forensic Interagency Task Force

11-28-17

Meeting Narrative

Those attending the meeting held in the DOC Training Academy Complex on the above date were: **Tricia Baffa** (Forensic Case Mgr); **Michelle Baxter** (OMHSAS); **Daniel Beauchamp** (Regional Forensic Liaison); **Tory Bright** (Regional MH Services Coordinator); **Talia Broubalow** (Northampton Co Mental Health); **Serrita Buie** (Del Co.); **Marge Chapman** (NAMI, Dauphin Co). **Janeen Christ** (Reg. Reentry Administrator); **Ron Colbert** (Scranton Counseling Ctr); **Lance Couturier** (Psychology Dir. Annuitant); **Hazel Dacus** (Forensic Coordinator); **David Dinich** (President FTAC); **James Fouts** (Dir of FSS); **Karla Freeman** (NHS ACT Director); **Heidi Fuehrer** (Psych Services Specialist); **Larry George** (Ex. Director, LCBHDS); **Janet Jones** (Gaudenzia **Mary Jordan** (Director Spec. Clinical+CJ Unit); **Joseph Korney** (BHARP); **Ginny Mastrine** (OMHSAS); **Ray McManamon** (Dir. Emergency & Court Serv); **Bob Merwine** (PCCD); **Barbara Quinn** (DDAP); **Jessica Reichenbach** (OMHSAS Rep); **Melissa Repsher** (Reentry Division Director PBPP); **Meagan Rice** (Justice Related Services); **Nicole Seiple** (Forensic MH Caseworker); **Matthew Sheaffer** (Parole Agent 2); **Jessica Penn Shires** (OMHSAS); **Deborah Shoemaker** (Ex. Dir. of PA Psychiatric Soc); **Jack Sommers** (Superintendent); **Vivian Spiese** (FTAC); **Rebecca Stevenson** (Forensic Case Manager); **Rhonda Tomcavage** (CIT Program Mgr); **Josh Warfield** (Court Coordinator); **Jackie Weaknecht** (PCCD); **Nancy Weiman** (SE Reg MH Services Consultant); **Lloyd Wertz** (FTAC); **Elaine Ziegler** (MH Mgr. Chester Co. Prison); and **Lisa Zook** (PA County MH/DS Admin Association).

The Forensic Interagency Task Force(FITF) was convened by FTAC on the above date with the attendees listed above.

Facilitator, Dave Dinich of FTAC, welcomed the group. He noted that the presenters were not, yet, in the room. He then asked attendees for introductions and a relating of new things that are happening in their areas of the Commonwealth from their varied perspectives. He also asked that the attendees if they had ever written a grant, noting that today's presentation was from a grant making part of

state government, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency(PCCD).

There was a Lancaster County Update shared by that county's Administrator in the context of the efforts at Norristown to vacate the civil beds there and move some to Wernersville State Hospital. He has been asked to move folks out to community settings to allow for that dispersal. There is currently an 8-person waiting list for that facility for his county.

It was also shared that there will be a meeting tomorrow on the Norristown State Mental Hospital (NSMH) campus regarding the proposed decision to halt the construction on the Norristown site until local officials and the public are offered an opportunity to provide comment and input. There was a brief description of the bed capacity and the purposes of those beds currently and those intended for the future as part of the settlement of the ACLU suit v. the Commonwealth.

It was shared that there is a CIT Training grant in Berks, Mercer and Allegheny counties for Community Corrections. There was a hope expressed that folks from those counties be encouraged to become involved in that training.

There was a new attendee introduced from OMHSAS who had previously been engaged in Peer Support Services and is new to her involvement in the area of Forensic Services.

Dave then discussed the process of grant writing with the really difficult part being the follow through on the activity proposed and funded through an awarded grant.

Today's meeting and presenters included:

Updates from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency(PCCD) by Bob Merwine, Office of Criminal Justice System Improvements; and Jackie Weaknecht, Program Manager of Grants Administration and County Programs.

(NOTE: These presenters brought a Power Point Presentation which could not be projected at the meeting site. It was forwarded to us and is included with this Narrative and should be used, at a minimum, to supplement the readers' understanding of the proceedings at the meeting.)

Dave, in introducing the presenters, noted that there have been numerous changes in leadership over the course of years, but that these two presenters have been in place of a number of those years and present the stability and a real grasp of the operations of the PCCD, since they have been vitally involved in those operations in seeking proposals and awarding funding to them.

First was Bob Merwine noting his position in the PCCD and discussing the changes in the Chairperson of the PCCD and how they occur. Charles Ramsey, former Police Chief in Philadelphia and Washington DC, is the current Chairperson. There are a number of Advisory Committees established as part of the legislative act that established the Commission. There are a number of others which can be established on an ad hoc basis as needed. Thus, when there is a change at the Chairperson level, there is little immediate change in the direction of the funding offered by the PCCD. The funding which the PCCD uses and awards is largely provided through its own funding proposals to federal funding sources.

Jackie Weaknecht then joined in the presentation. She noted that the Mental Health and Justice Committee(MHAJC) is a very diverse Committee and includes a Consumer on its membership. She noted that the MHAJC was created in 2009, as it became more and more clear that folks with SMI were languishing in Jails and Prisons without being offered assistance to make parole or prepare for release.

Next was the discussion of the creation of the state level Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, encouraging the creation of Criminal Justice Advisory Boards, operational in 66 counties at the present time. These are used to help the PCCD better understand individual local needs and then endorse grant applications to the PCCD as they might arise.

Bob noted that pre-trial assessment is a current priority. He noted the history of mapping in the commonwealth, in 45 of the 67 counties in PA. This helped to direct the PCCD to the specific needs in counties which might benefit from funding offers. Most recently there was a “De-escalation” Train the Trainers effort which had resulted in a number of folks being trained including a session at the upcoming Criminal Rights Conference.

Another priority is a data technology resource location and training.

The next priority is the Evidence-Based Practices and Programs. This can be a requirement of the Federal Funding Sources. However, there is also a need to fund innovative efforts that might yet have to become recognized as evidence based. There is a current effort to make phone calls to Senior Citizens who live without a great deal of community supports. There was a question about whether this might be a medium that could be used to share information about the Community Health Choices (CHC) implementation across the Commonwealth, beginning in the Southwest Region. While that is not a current part of the plan, it is a potential that could be considered. There was another question about what constitutes Evidence-Based programming, especially in the Criminal Justice System. The response was that there is a great deal of Evidence-Based programs in the Criminal Justice system. There was also a differentiation noted between Evidence-Based Research, versus Evidence-Based Programming. It was also shared that there is more of this evidence based programming in service to the juvenile populations versus the adult. Some of these include Motivational Interviewing and other evidence-based programs in other areas to be used in the Criminal Justice settings.

There was another question about CJABs in counties and whether there is a requirement to involve MH programs in their County's CJAB. The response was that there is encouragement in the establishment of those Boards to include the local MH Program, but that there cannot be requirements set forth to force their inclusion. Also, there are CJAB Regional Representatives who are the conduit of information to and from the relevant CJAB's and the PCCD.

The PCCD Website Address was shared. It is: PCCD.PA.GOV

It was also shared that there is a conference in Spring 2018 that will focus upon the activities of the CJABs. April 3 and 4 are the dates for the 2018 Conference located in State College at the Penn Stater. The PCCD website will soon offer information about registration for that event.

Re-Entry is the final priority of the PCCD across the Commonwealth.

Recently there was the completion of funding for the "Centers of Excellence" which had been funded over several years. Currently there is a higher focus on the "Stepping Up" initiative.

As part of the “Stepping Up” initiative, there are six questions that must be answered:

- Is your leadership committed?
- Do you conduct timely screening and assessment?
- Do you have baseline data?
- Have you conducted a process and analysis of services?
- Have you prioritized policy, practice, and funding?
- Do you track your progress?

Mr. Merwine noted that there is a general impression that PA is seen as being very advanced in these areas at the current time. It was also noted that there is a Stepping Up conference next week with participants from Dauphin County included in making presentations. That conference will center upon those above noted questions. There are currently 200 registrants. Two counties, Bucks and Columbia, will be highlighted at that time.

He then noted that there were two separate funding offerings for housing as part of the effort directed toward those with SMI. This also includes the provision of treatment in those settings.

March 20, 2018 is the next State-Wide Training for CIT with specific sessions directed toward issues such as Trauma, Autism and others. This will be at the Days Inn in State College.

The discussion then moved to the Forensic Peer Support Specialist initiative between OMHSAS and the DOC. Jessica Penn Shires updated the project from her perspective from OMHSAS. Additionally, she noted that there is a specialty training for Certified Peer Specialists in the Community to work with folks who have been involved in the Forensic system.

The next topic was a discussion of three upcoming funding efforts.

County Intermediate Punishment Program. This can address the issues faced by folks with Co-Occurring disorders and for MH stand-alone services as well. These funds can be applied through the Probation Program or the SCA in a given county. The applicants are the Counties. Thus, any programs must be in contract with the

service providers who might support the efforts. Any participants must be enrolled in the Intermediate Punishment Program to qualify for participation.

Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Funds is another area of funding. This happens to be one that has a series of goals and objectives which can be assessed and addressed by the PCCD in that process. The funding solicitation will be offered soon, as the funding has just become solidified. This offering will be in January 2018 with their awarding at the September PCCD Meeting. The target amount of funds to be released will be about \$7million with an expectation of a two-year period of funding perhaps \$150,000 in year one and 70% of that in year two. There will be a specific MH orientation to one of the Objective offered.

The Mental Health Advancement Funds is the final sector to be described with the intention to encourage counties to be engaged in the “Stepping Up” initiative. This is expected in the first quarter of 2018.

There was then a discussion of the Naloxone program. There will be a Central Coordinating Entity (CCE) established to monitor these efforts across the Commonwealth and in individual counties. This involves the distribution of kits to be directed by the Counties and other entities, not just the funding to purchase them. The website noted above can be used to access this program as well. Many of the recent funds directed toward the distribution of Naloxone have been expended, with the hope that efforts will continue to be made to assure the availability of the drug across the State. There was a concern expressed about the changes in the use of illicit drugs in given communities and the need to have this remedial medication available in the case of overdose.

There is substance abuse education demand reduction funding that is distributed each year by the PCCD. Some funding needs to be directed toward media campaigns, workplace education, and another toward the adult community. In those cases, non-profit organizations are the eligible recipients, not the Counties. There are promising practices types of grant for which application can be made.

There was a discussion on the work on “Intercept Zero” and the holes that might be found in the system and efforts to potentially capture, educate, treat, and re-direct individuals BEFORE their entry into the Forensic system.

There were then some questions about research that might be eligible for funding. One was directed toward the funding of research on a specific issue. How would that be accomplished from the PCCD perspective? The response noted that there is a Research Advisory Committee that would handle that type of request. There are resources that are available to that Committee that can be directed toward that type of research request.

There was a Pre-Trial Data and Technology and the assurance that those are still active priorities under the Byrne JAG grant application. In the response, it was noted that the partners named in the grant application must offer letters of support to confirm their intention to participate after the grant is awarded. Being clear and concise is also important to the reviewers. Noting the sustainability of the project after the expiry of the grant funding is important as well.

There was a question about the funding that comes from the PCCD and the potential of its being directed outside of the County program. It was clarified that this happens all the time, but there is no capability to afford funding to for-profit organizations, based on federal requirements.

There was a question offered as to a program that they might offer, if funding were made available without specific guidelines. Jackie noted that her passion is that of the SMI population and their being victimized at times as well. Awareness campaigns and other programs that underscore the special needs of this MH/Criminal Justice population would be that focus. Mr. Merwine noted that Training and Planning are the two greatest needs that come to them from counties. Once training and planning can be effectively completed, then we are more fully aware of the needs that exist.

The next meeting of the FITF is scheduled for January 23, 2018 at 10:00 in the DOC Training Academy.

Respectfully submitted,

Lloyd G. Wertz, FSS/FTAC