RESTRICTIVE HOUSING REFORM FOR INMATES WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

Lois Fegan, Chief of Restrictive Housing
Melvin Davis, Warden – Wallens Ridge State Prison
Virginia Department of Corrections

Tuesday July 13, 2021
Southern Legislative Conference – STAR Finalist Presentation
43 Facilities
23,897 Inmates in Custody

43 Probation & Parole Offices
66,462 Inmates on Supervision

Mental Health in Corrections

- US citizens that suffer from mental illness are more likely to be incarcerated than receive treatment in the community.
- US psychiatric beds fell from 559,000 in 1955 to 35,000 in 2017 while the number of prison beds rose by 600% during the same time period.
- Correctional facilities are now the primary mental health institutions in the country yet were never designed to manage this population.
Development of Secure Diversionary Treatment Program

Study
- Examine Best Practices
- Review Clinical & Operational Literature
- Site Visits

Plan
- Establish SMI Committee
- Identify Target Population
- Risk Needs Assessments

Do
- Develop Curriculum, Program Manuals & Data Collection
- Hire & Train Staff
- Establish Housing Unit & Bed Assignments
Secure Diversionary Treatment Program Goals

- Reduce the number of inmates with a SMI managed in a Restrictive Housing environment
- Reduce the number of serious and minor disciplinary infractions involving SMI inmates
- Reduce the number of emergency transports for SMI inmates
- Reduce the number of serious incidents involving an SMI inmate
- Improve pro-social metrics including resiliency, social relationships, stress management and communication
Program Overview

- **Intensive – 17 Beds**
  Inmates with the most critical mental health needs

- **High Security – 22 Beds**
  Inmates with the most security supervision needs

- **Diversionary – 80 Beds**
  Less serious risks and needs, more stable MH history
Program Components

**Phase 1:**
Intake/Orientation
Rapport Building & Motivation

**Phase 2:**
Active Treatment
Structured & Unstructured Time

**Phase 3:**
Maintenance
Enhanced Privileges

**Phase 4:**
Transition
Progress & Pathway
Referral Process

Referral
- Made by the facility MDT & MH Staff

Clinical Review
- Mental Health Clinical Supervisor of Referring Region

Regional Review
- Regional Operations Chief of Western Region

Statewide Review
- Multi Institution Treatment Team (MITT)
### Program Costs & Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Personnel Services</th>
<th>Equipment and Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River North/Diversionary</td>
<td>$963,607.00</td>
<td>$15,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wallens Ridge/High Security</td>
<td>$212,508.05</td>
<td>$15,839.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion/Intensive</td>
<td>$315,696.13</td>
<td>$9,995.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDTP Overall Totals</td>
<td>$1,491,811.18</td>
<td>$40,835.16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total**

- $1,532,646.34

### Program Staffing

- Casework Counselors
- Psychology Associate
- Treatment Officers
- Security Officers
SDTP Security Performance Measures

March 31, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1 Year Prior</th>
<th>1 Year After</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RHU PLACEMENTS</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY CHARGES</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>MINOR DISCIPLINARY CHARGES</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>SERIOUS INCIDENTS</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTS</td>
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<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPACT

SOURCE: VADOC Research - Statistical Analysis & Forecast Unit, May 3, 2021
Progressive Change in Virginia

- VADOC has a **23.9% recidivism rate**, routinely one of the lowest in the country
- Virginia is ahead of the curve – as many states are now passing laws mandating diversion of SMI inmates from Restrictive Housing settings
- Initiated change in **January 2020** on a pathway to eliminate Restrictive Housing

Restrictive Housing to Restorative Housing
How does SDTP Translate?

• Threats to Public Safety applies to any local, state or federal system
• Goal to help treat and support individuals with mental illness crosses all platforms = reduced recidivism
• Diverting SMI inmates from a Restrictive Housing environment has shown to be an effective solution to successfully manage a challenging inmate population

• Keys for Successful Implementation
  • Establish a Shared Vision
  • Investment from Leadership & Line Staff
  • Valid Classification & Risk Assessment Tools
  • Training Staff
  • Dedicate a Separate Housing Unit
  • Maintain Program Fidelity
  • Involve Inmates

We are in the business of helping people be better!
Contact Information

Lois Fegan
Chief of Restrictive Housing, VADOC
804-837-1028
Lois.Fegan@vadoc.Virginia.gov

Melvin Davis
Warden, Wallens Ridge State Prison
804-400-2318
Melvin.Davis@vadoc.Virginia.gov

www.vadoc.Virginia.gov
@VADOC