

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Behavioral Health Division Administration
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: February 15, 2012

TO: Chairman Lee Holloway, Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by Paula Lucey, Administrator, Behavioral Health Division

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, submitting an informational report regarding an update on the study group activities to study the possible transfer of management of inmate mental health and health care services to DHHS

Background

As part of the 2012 Budget, the County Board passed an amendment directing the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to study and make recommendations related to the possible transfer of management of the physical and mental health services for inmates from the Office of the Sheriff to DHHS. The Sheriff had proposed to out-source this service as part of his 2012 Requested Budget, but concerns were raised and the direction was given to study this potential transfer with county departments or to identify alternatives. A report was submitted in February to outline the study group and the work plan for the group. This report seeks to offer a brief summary of activities.

Discussion

The physical and mental health care of inmates has been a point of discussion for many years. The Christiansen Consent Decree outlines the standards of care to which the Milwaukee County Sheriff is accountable. The method or agent to provide services to achieve those standards is not defined and a number of alternatives could exist. As discussed within the budget process, there is an interest in exploring alternative options for the management of inmate physical and mental health services, with one possible option being the transfer of the service management to DHHS.

Any change of this magnitude, and with the consideration of human lives at stake, requires a careful and thoughtful process to ensure the best outcomes are achieved.

To achieve that a work plan has been developed to manage the process, the objectives of the study group were also developed.

Work Group

An initial meeting of the work group was held on February 7, 2012. The membership includes representatives from clinical and fiscal staff DHHS/BHD, Corporation Counsel, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office staff, county board staff and the Christensen Decree Medical Monitor.

Plan of Work

Based on the established plan of work, the initial meeting had a focus of orientation and data review. Members of the Sheriff's Office presented a review of the activity of the health services within both facilities. The data indicated that of the approximately 33,000 inmates screened at booking, approximately 50% or 18,000 inmates are screened as having a medical or mental health issue requiring additional assessment and potential treatment. Information was shared about the most common medications administered and the volume of medication administered annually.

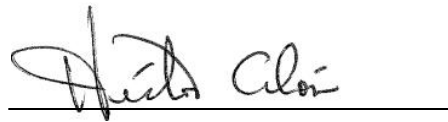
At the meeting, the Sheriff's Office announced they were recruiting for a medical director and had a potential candidate. In addition, the Sheriff's Office announced that they were anticipating the release of an RFP for health services.

Next Steps

The work group will continue to meet aggressively to address the work plan as outlined in the previous report. The next meeting, scheduled for March 28, will focus on standards of care for inmates and accreditation standards.

Recommendation

This is an informational report. No action is necessary.



Héctor Colón, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: County Executive Chris Abele
Tia Torhorst, County Executive's Office
Terrence Cooley, Chief of Staff – County Board
Pat Farley, Director - DAS
Pamela Bryant, Interim Fiscal and Budget Administrator – DAS
CJ Pahl, Assistant Fiscal and Budget Administrator – DAS
Antoinette Thomas-Bailey, Fiscal and Management Analyst – DAS
Rick Ceschin, County Board Staff
Jennifer Collins, County Board Staff
Jodi Mapp, County Board Staff
Inspector Richard Schmidt, Sheriff's Office
Jon Priebe, Sheriff's Office
Molly Pahl, Sheriff's Office