



The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is committed to being a leader in identifying issues faced by all people affected by mental illness, facilitating improvements in mental health services, giving consumers and families a strong voice, reducing stigma, and implementing recovery principles.

Date: May 20, 2014

Re: Presentation to Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force on HOC Accomplishments

From: Mary Neubauer, Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force Co-chair
Martina Gollin Graves, Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force Co-chair
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To: Superintendent Michael Hafemann, Milwaukee County House of Correction
Assistant Superintendent Jose Hernandez, Milwaukee County House of Correction

Copy: County Executive Chris Abele

On behalf of the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force, thank you for a very informative presentation and discussion at our May meeting. Even more important, we want to thank you for your leadership in advancing many positive changes at the House of Correction and share our commitment to working with you to advance additional positive changes.

The Task Force has long had grave concerns regarding systemic problems with providing inmates with access to adequate and timely mental health services and other medical care. It was very encouraging to hear from you, as well as Dr. Boswell and Attorney Peter Koneazny, about the significant improvements that have been made –improvements that many of the advocacy and provider organizations on our Task Force can also attest to based on their work with clients. In addition to the considerable improvements with access to mental health and other health care services, there are many positive changes related to case management services, including collaboration with Special Needs Housing through DHHS for individuals who have a mental health diagnosis and are in need of housing. The support provided through case management greatly increases the chance that individuals will be successful when they return to the community. It was also encouraging to hear about the groups that are available for inmates with a history of substance abuse or mental illness. This type of programming is greatly needed – we strongly endorse it and hope that the capacity will continue to grow to meet the significant needs for these services.

We also wanted to commend your commitment to re-establishing educational programs at the HOC, as well as establishing work preparedness and employment programs. We strongly endorse this focus on rehabilitation and believe it is a smart investment that will result in inmates better prepared to be contributing members of the community upon re-entry. It is also encouraging to see that you have re-established the inmate electronic monitoring/ home detention program and believe that is an effective program for those who participate, as well as a smart fiscal strategy.

We welcome the chance for continuing dialogue and to work collaboratively to advance additional improvements such as employment of Certified Peer Specialists at the HOC, exploring strategies to offer benefits counselling for individuals with disabilities as well as enrollment in Medicaid or other insurance, and increased capacity for the support groups as well as the education and employment programs you have established.

Thank you for the significant positive changes you have advanced over the past year, and for your commitment to dialogue and partnership with the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force and other community partners. We look forward to continuing to work together to advance reforms.