

**Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Members: Tips for Supporting the Local Behavioral Health Service Continuum**

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**CHIEF PROBATION & PAROLE OFFICERS**

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The chief of a probation, parole, or community corrections agency has an influential role in shaping the services provided to millions of people under community supervision in the United States. Because of the many people with mental and substance use disorders in community corrections, chief probation and parole officers are a critical partner in addressing systemic issues and access to resources along the local behavioral health services continuum.

**Support Evidence-Based Programming for Clients with Mental and Substance Use Disorders**

- *Create and support* specialized caseloads for people with mental and substance use disorders.
- *Ensure* all staff receive training on mental health, substance use disorders, and trauma; for officers supervising specialized caseloads, ensure they receive additional, on-going training specific to the population they oversee.
- *Adopt* the use of standardized, validated assessment tools to provide officers with information and shape the case plans based on clients' criminogenic risks and needs, behavioral health needs, and responsivity.
- *Support* the use of a trauma-informed approach with all clients.

**Engage Diverse Partners to Create Holistic Programming & Drive Systems Change**

- *Strengthen* partnerships with communities and community-based organizations through continuous outreach and regular communication.
- *Establish* relationships with Medication Assisted Treatment providers serving clients under community supervision to enhance support of the clients' recovery.
- *Fund* community-based treatment beds to be available to clients under community corrections and in need of more intensive or residential treatment.
- *Formalize* partnerships with housing providers and, where possible, educate staff on accessing Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).
- *Engage* with supported employment programs to increase clients' placement into competitive employment with livable wages.
- *Develop a system* for sharing data between behavioral health and criminal justice system partners involved with clients under community supervision.
- *Participate* in the local Criminal Justice Coordinating Council or subcommittee focused on behavioral health issues to develop innovative solutions to community needs, including:
  - Improving collaboration between local stakeholders.
  - Identifying people with mental and substance use disorders in the criminal justice system.
  - Assessing opportunities for diversion from the criminal justice system to treatment where appropriate.
  - Identifying gaps and opportunities in the local behavioral health service continuum.
  - Advocating for funding for behavioral health services and diversion programs.
  - Fostering a culture change to increase reliance on behavioral health professionals rather than criminal justice professionals for people with mental and substance use disorders.