

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
CORRECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 12, 2013

Santa Fe, New Mexico

This meeting of the Santa Fe County Corrections Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Frank Susman at approximately 3:00 p.m. on the above-cited date at the Youth Development Center, 4250 Airport Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum with the following individuals present:

Members Present:

Frank Susman, Legal Community
Mary Ellen Gonzales, Restorative Justice
Joan Morales, Public Defender's Office
Steve S. Spencer, Medical Community/Substance Abuse
Maria Jose Rodriguez Cadiz, Mental Health Community
Dale Lettenberger, Law Enforcement - Investigative Bureau

Member(s) Excused:

Michelle George, Juvenile Justice
Judy Williams, Community at-large
Maria Cristina Lopez, Immigrant Advocacy Community

Staff Present:

Tila Rendon-Varela, Department Administrator, Public Safety Department
Mark Caldwell, Santa Fe County Deputy Warden

Ms. Morales requested a copy of the HUGS grants the County wrote in conjunction with Christus St. Vincent which deal with reintegration. Mr. Caldwell said once he locates it he will forward it to Ms. Rendon-Varela for distribution.

III. Approval of the Minutes of November 14, 2013 Meeting

A series of corrections were offered and the minutes were resubmitted with those corrections for action at the January meeting.

IV. Report on Behavioral Health Conference held on December 4, 2013

Ms. Morales was recognized for her work in coordinating the conference.

Dr. Spencer said he attended the morning session and found it to be very informative and efficiently conducted. He was particularly struck by the speaker from the City police department who indicated that there is no place to take drunks for sobering up: there is no "drunk tank" available.

A discussion regarding alternatives to address this void occurred. The notion of reimplementing of protective custody in the jail or an accessible 24/7 location was mentioned.

Ms. Morales noted that the City's Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) will need a place to put intoxicated citizens. The protective custody law which is state statute allows for the protection of the individual. Currently they are taken to the hospital which is not an effective alternative. She said the Sobering Center is required to obtain medical clearance before admitting an individual. Mr. Lettenberger said if the individual is intoxicated at a high level they would be transported to the hospital and then released when they sobered up. It is common that the individual resumes drinking and then the police pick them up and jail them.

Mr. Caldwell explained that an individual has to be booked with a charge for admittance to the jail. If an individual is intoxicated to the point they are non-ambulatory or non-responsive they are taken to the hospital for medical clearance. He understood the Sobering Center's mission was to provide a location, other than jail or the hospital, for the detention of an intoxicated individual.

Dr. Spencer referred to Correctional Health Care Standards that require medical care in the event there is a question regarding the individual's health. He emphasized that drunks are a high-risk population and when incarcerated sometimes they get worse and die. Arrest can trigger suicide for an alcoholic and without incarceration they can die from exposure to cold weather.

Ms. Morales understood the Sobering Center, funded through the DWI Program and administered by Christus St. Vincent, has 8 or 9 beds, and those beds tend to be occupied to capacity during the winter when people are looking for shelter. Mr. Lettenberger said an individual has to agree to go to the Center and that rarely happens.

Ms. Rodriguez Cadiz commented that it is reckless to rely on the individual's response when they are intoxicated. She noted the hypocrisy in that the Sobering Center does not allow a law enforcement officer to make a decision regarding admittance where the hospital does. She said it was critical to help the individual.

Ms. Morales said the CARE Connection had served as the assessment hub for the Sobering Center but it appears that center may be closing. She said the courts relied on that assessment for sentencing purposes.

It was noted that the City has a consumption ordinance but not an ordinance regarding intoxication in public.

Ms. Morales said LEAD wants to keep their focus population – heroin users – out of the system and to work exclusively with providers.

The question of locking up individuals to sober them up was discussed along with addiction as a disease and the tremendous burden on the courts and corrections to care for these individuals who need treatment.

Ms. Rodriguez Cadiz commented on the importance of recognizing and implementing the correct treatment for an individual. She opined that alcoholism and other addictions were not correctly addressed through the Corrections Department and was eager to give LEAD a chance.

Mr. Caldwell said he understood part of the Committee's charge was to identify the voids in the corrections program and the lack of a safe holding place and treatment clearly fits that charge. He mentioned Gallup/McKinley County which has what is know as the world's largest drunk tank. The spirit and intent in McKinley County was to get someone off the street before they endangered themselves or others. He was unaware of any formal charges affiliated with admittance to the facility.

Accepting that substance abuse and alcohol abuse are medical conditions a discussion ensued regarding the hospital's responsibility and that protective custody should occur at the healthcare level. It was noted by the participants that these individuals are not being treated at the hospital.

Mr. Caldwell said the possibility of death during alcohol withdrawal in the jail is exponentially higher than for those withdrawing from heroin.

Dr. Spencer's statement that there is a need for a special facility, not a jail, for these individuals was met with committee consensus. He asked that this be the main focus of the next CAC report to the BCC. The BCC should be aware of this committee's concern for the health and welfare of these people and the lack of any facility to appropriately house them until they sober up.

Chair Susman said having financial information on the cost to the County would be an important factor to bring to the BCC attention.

Commenting on the success of the conference, Ms. Gonzales said it was great to be introduced to what the different agencies provide in an overview setting. She mentioned that kids have the same issues and a similar conference should occur with the Juvenile Justice Board.

Ms. Rodriguez Cadiz expressed disappointment that professionals in the field of behavioral health were not respectful when speaking about individual mental health patient issues.

Ms. Rodriguez Cadiz mentioned the lack of compliance in domestic violence offenders completing the 52-week program. Completing the entire course offers the offenders a greater chance of turning their lives around.

Ms. Morales said questions that arose in the forum that were not answered due to time constraints will be emailed to the appropriate presenters and they will be answered.

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In response to Chair Susman's question of whether it was appropriate that CAC spearhead these efforts, there was committee consensus it was appropriate.

Ms. Morales said it took a great effort to arrange the conference. She estimated the conference drew 120 participants. She said there was a huge response and it's obvious that the three County committees – Health Policy and Planning Commission, DWI Planning Commission and Correction Advisory Committee – demonstrated that the committees desire to work together.

It was mentioned that it was counterproductive that some of the presenters chose not to disclose where their organization was struggling which would have helped to identify the gaps in the system.

Ms. Morales said her title is Alternative Sentencing Advocate. The criminal justice system is complicated and difficult to navigate through from the first point of arrest through to the end of probation. The conference agenda was staged from arrest through to probation and treatment. Treatment requires a lifetime commitment to bring about change and requires community support.

The challenge of pulling off the December 4th conference is easily surpassed by the challenge of keeping the momentum going and what needs to be done, stated the Chair.

It was mentioned that the quality of care for substance and alcohol abuse is essential in addressing this epidemic issue. When police are involved these individuals are in a crisis and that needs to be addressed appropriately. With 50 percent of the County's budget going to corrections, there was recognition that it is a staggering problem.

An RFP was issued for a body scanner for the jail and Ms. Rendon-Varela anticipated the equipment may be purchased in February. Mr. Caldwell said correction's budget was tailored to target contraband. He said the contraband issue in jails is nationwide. The scanner will assist in stemming the flow of contraband. The vast majority of contraband arrives with the detainee and through various means of intelligence staff is able to ascertain who is coming into the facility with contraband. A dry cell is utilized where an inmate is not sent into the general population and their excrement is examined. Staff does not conduct body searches but there is an available provision to take an individual to Christus for that.

Mr. Caldwell said the drug problem is a war being fought in every facility in the country. The County purchased a drug detection canine and that has been very successful. There is a group of "no fliers" with whom the jail is familiar with and staff is prepared for them to be carrying/packing drugs.

Dr. Spencer pointed out that the resolution creating the CAC calls for a biannual report to include issues and recommendations to be presented to the BCC. The report shall be assembled by the committee's County liaison, Ms. Rendon-Varela, and printed by the County. He said he feels strongly that the report should be printed with the CAC's approval.

Chair Susman said the conference will be part of his presentation to the BCC at the January 28th meeting.

Ms. Rendon-Varela explained the BCC packet deadlines and Chair Susman said he would distribute a draft of the presentation 12/26 via email. Committee members were asked to provide input within a week and the final will be sent to Ms. Rendon-Varela in early January.

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SANTA FE COUNTY
CORRECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

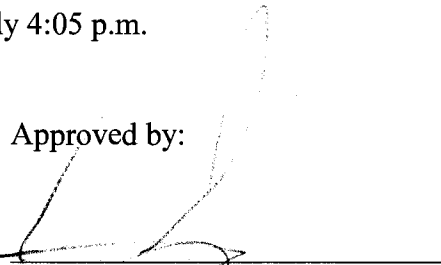
It was mentioned that the Alternative Sentencing Division in San Juan County was remarkable. San Juan created a low-level facility with 82 beds for DWI that has a 90-day inpatient facility with follow-up after-care. The program has helped the community and has proven to reduce recidivism. The program runs the county \$3.8 million annually.

V. Schedule Next Meeting: January 9, 2014 at 3 p.m. at the Youth Development Program.

VI. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:05 p.m.

Approved by:



Frank Susman, Chair

Respectfully submitted by:

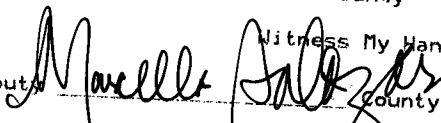

Karen Farrell, Wordswork



COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
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Deputy 
Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Geraldine Salazar
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM