



Program Dispatch

First Edition, Fiscal Year 2010-2011



Forensic Integrated Mental Health Services

**Mental Health Services Act Dollars
Working in the Community!**

Service Goals

- **Expand Mental Health Court** (a specialized program in which defendants with mental illness are diverted into court-supervised, community-based treatment)
- **Maintain seriously mentally ill individuals** in the least restrictive environment possible
- **Implement** Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Program
- **Reduce recidivism** (going back to jail or psychiatric hospitalization)
- **Increase public safety** through focusing on information choice and decision making
- **Increase community tenure** through development of independent living skills and providing appropriate array of services and support
- **Support recovery**
- **Expand** the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) Program
- **Improve** positive police and mental health system collaboration and communication
- **Decrease** repeat calls for service

Why was Forensic Integrated Mental Health Created?

Mental Health Courts were established throughout the United States due to federal legislation and funding in the late 1990's. The County of San Bernardino was one of the first counties to have such a program, beginning in 1999. The County of San Bernardino currently has five Mental Health Courts located in: San Bernardino, Rancho Cucamonga, Barstow, Victorville and Joshua Tree.

In 2007, the county funded a new forensic treatment program based on the well researched Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Model to complement existing innovative programs. The ACT programs are community-based and include the Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) and Supervised Treatment After Release (STAR) programs. Both of these programs are full service partnerships that assist clients with the collaboration of multi-disciplinary teams. Clients who need assistance in keeping appointments at mental health clinics are visited weekly or as needed by staff which includes the psychiatrist assigned to the case.

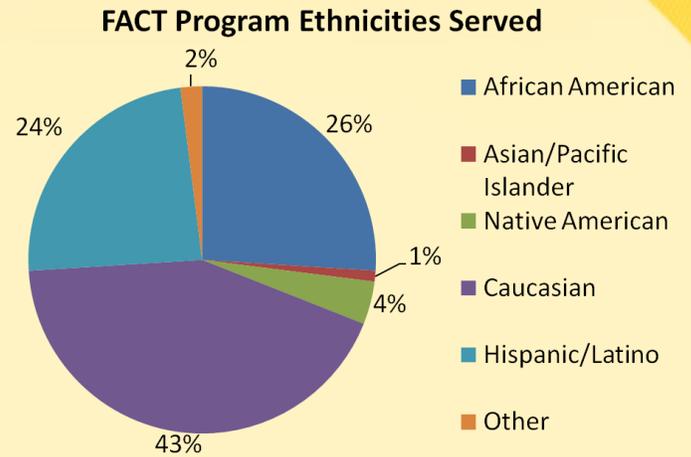
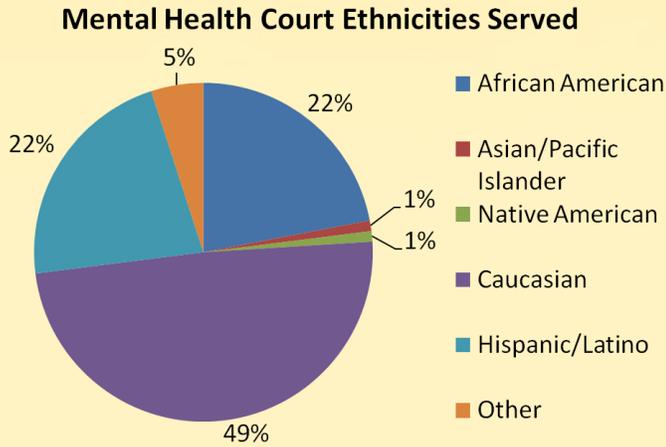
Also, the County of San Bernardino Mental Health and Criminal Justice Consensus Committee identified the need to provide law enforcement with extensive training as first-line responders to crisis calls in which mental health issues are identified or suspected. Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is a national program, and DBH adopted the core principles and tailored the program to meet the needs of its community.

Positive Results

- STAR clients have a **67%** decrease in per-year-jail-days and a **74%** decrease in per-year-hospital days in comparison to pre-enrollment levels
- FACT clients have **decreased their number of days spent in jail by 78%**
- FACT clients have **decreased their number of hospital admissions by 84%**
- Clients have an **81% drop in homeless days since 2009**
- FACT staff have assisted **80%** of their clients in being awarded or reinstated on benefit programs such as State Supplemental Income (SSI) and Medi-Cal
- An increase in law enforcement officer awareness of and ability to access appropriate community resources
- An increase in law enforcement officer safety and the safety of those in crisis
- **90%** of the individuals who had encounters with the CIT Trained law enforcement officers access mental health services



Program Data



Countywide over **400 law enforcement first responders** have received CIT !

Making A Difference

Fourteen months of success! A female client was released from jail charged with possession of a controlled substance and accepted Mental Health Court (MHC) services as part of her probation. She was placed in a sober living home and supervised by MHC staff. She continued to comply with the terms of her probation and started a 12-step program in the community as well as accessing counseling services. Through the efforts and cooperation of probation, MHC staff and the client, she was able to move out of the sober living home into her own residence and regained custody of her daughter. The client continued to work at meeting all requirements placed upon her and successfully graduated from the program. She currently remains clean and sober while actively working in the community to support herself and her daughter. She remains medication compliant and is attending classes at a local adult community college where she is working toward becoming a registered nurse.

Challenges

Housing:

- Many clients who do not have immediate family or may have restricted contact with family:
 - Are force into homelessness
 - Must live in homeless shelters
 - Run the risk of having to move frequently

Benefits:

- Lack of a documented psychiatric history of mental illness lead to the denial of initial SSI applications, forcing applicants to go through an appeal process
- Clients regularly face the challenge of maintaining sobriety
- Barriers in securing employment due to having a felony record, resulting in a lack of financial support and health benefits

Solutions in Progress

- Assist in locating safe and sober housing arrangements to increase successful transition back into the community
- Locate appropriate, stable local area shelters that are willing to be a part of treatment teams
- Working with clients to apply for SSI (currently 38% of STAR clients have SSI)
- Incorporating wellness goals to treatment plans, such as developing individualized plans for physical exercise and enhancing the resilience of the whole person
- The increase of promoting employment as a recovery tool
- Promoting the value of education, including school attendance and obtaining a GED
- Using volunteerism as a recovery tool to increase skill levels
- Assisting clients in reducing harmful behaviors that lead to recidivism
- Job development to locate employers willing to hire individuals with felony backgrounds
- The County of San Bernardino Sheriff's Department is pursuing integrating CIT into its Basic Academy rather than holding special sessions. Since the Basic Academy is used throughout the region for training new law enforcement officers, new deputies will soon receive CIT training at the start of their careers.

"I believe the whole program is saving my life."-Client Comment

For information regarding services please call:

ACCESS UNIT

(888) 743-1478 or (888) 743-1481 (TTY)

Dial 2-1-1 to get information and referrals for health and social services.
Get connected with a live operator 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Awards & Recognition

The STAR Program received the 2009 "Best Practices Award" from the California's Council on Mentally Ill Offenders!

Collaborative Partners

Thank you to our partners!

County of San Bernardino
Sheriff's Department

Local Police Departments
Probation Department

University Campus Police
Department of Defense

United States Customs and
Border Protection