

View from the States: Community-Based Interventions for Veterans

Memphis Police Department Crisis Intervention Team

And

Memphis VA Medical Center:

A Community Partnership

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The New York Times

December 4, 2010

State Cuts Put Officers on Front Lines of Mental Care

By Katie Zezima

PORTLAND, Me. — As community mental health systems fray under the strain of state budget cuts and a weak economy, law enforcement officers across the nation are increasingly having to step in to provide the emergency services that clinics have typically offered the mentally ill...

...In Oklahoma, calls to the police involving mental illness have increased by 50 percent in the past year, said Stacey Puckett, executive director of the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police. The state has cut about \$17 million in mental health financing this year. Ms. Puckett said officers were “traveling from one end of the state to the other and are out of their departments for 6, 8, 10 hours at a time...“It’s the bed shortage,” she said. “We just do not have enough beds for the numbers.”

Mental Illness in Jails and Prisons

- At least 16 percent of inmates in jails and prisons have a serious mental illness.
- 40 percent of individuals with serious mental illnesses have been in jail or prison at some time in their lives.
- In 1955 there was one psychiatric bed for every 300 Americans.
- In 2005 there was one psychiatric bed for every 3,000 Americans.

More Mentally Ill Persons Are in Jails and Prisons Than Hospitals: A Survey of the States. National Sheriffs' Association & Treatment Advocacy Center, May 2010

Percentage of Jail and Prison Inmates With Serious Mental Illness



“Two hundred years ago, the most common treatment for seriously mentally ill individuals was jail ...Today it’s back to the 1830s.”

Criminalizing the Seriously Mentally Ill: The Abuse of Jails as Mental Hospitals. A Joint Report NAMI and Public Citizen’s Health Research Group, 1992.

People with Mental Illness in Jails

- Annually in the US, approximately 11.4 million people are arrested and booked into jails
- Approximately 1,100,000 people—8 percent of annual jail bookings—have current symptoms of serious mental illness
- Of these approximately 75 percent have co-occurring substance use disorders.

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006; The National GAINS Center, 2004; Steadman & Naples, 2005; New Freedom Commission, 2004.

People with Mental Illness in Prisons

- **1,528,041 prisoners in state or federal prisons**

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007

- **15 percent or 229,206 persons with mental illness in prisons**

Department of Justice, 2006

- **Persons with mental illness “often rotate back and forth between being homeless and in jails or prisons**

Out of the Shadows, Torrey, E.F. 1997.

Veterans with Mental Illness in Jails and Prisons

- **Veterans constitute 10.4% of US Adults**
- **Veterans are 11.7% of Jail inmates**
- **Veterans are 9.4% of State and Federal Prison inmates**

Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004; US Census Bureau, 2006

Department of Veterans Affairs

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

President Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

Veterans Health Administration

- **21 Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISN)**
- **1,400 Points of Care**
 - 155 VA Medical Centers
 - 900 CBOCs
 - 135 Nursing Homes
 - 50 Residential Rehabilitation Programs
 - 209 VET Centers
- **Population Served**
 - 25,000,000 veterans
 - 7,500,000 enrolled
 - 5,500,000 served/yr
 - 1,000,000 Mental Health
- **200,000 Employees**

Uniform Mental Health Services in VA Medical Centers and Clinics—2008

- VA mental health services must be **recovery-oriented**
- Mental health services must be provided with cultural competence
- Evidence based psychotherapy
- Evidence based pharmacotherapy
- Coordinate care for dual diagnosis Veterans
- **Homeless Programs**
- **Health Care for Reentry Veterans**
- **Veterans Justice Outreach**
- Suicide Prevention
- Supportive Employment
- Rural mental health care

May 27, 2009

Each VA Medical Center must designate a VJO Specialist...responsible for:

- 1. Direct outreach**
- 2. Case management**
- 3. Liaison with local justice system partners**
- 4. Provide or coordinate training for law enforcement personnel...on Veteran-specific issues**

**Requirements for VA Activities Focused on Justice-Involved Veterans
VA Deputy Undersecretary for Health Operations and Management**

May 27, 2009

“Law Enforcement Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) are another promising avenue for connecting justice-involved Veterans with needed mental health and other services. In Memphis, Tennessee, and other communities using the Memphis Model, VA clinicians train law enforcement personnel on Veteran-specific issues, including PTSD and TBI, to inform encounters with Veterans in crisis.”

VA Deputy Undersecretary for Health for Operations and Management

Integrated Crisis Services for Behavioral Emergencies

A Community Partnership Since 1988

**Memphis Police
Services**

Patrol Division

**Crisis Intervention
Team (CIT)**

**Mental Health
Community**

U of Memphis

**Regional Medical
Center (MED)**

VA Medical Center

Community MHC

**U of Tennessee
(1988-2003)**

NAMI

**National Alliance on
Mental Illness (NAMI)**

NAMI Memphis



Dr. Burl Gilliland

Memphis Model

- **40 Hour Training Curriculum for:**
 - Selected Uniform Patrol Officers
 - Dispatchers
- **Training is provided by:**
 - Community mental health professionals
 - Experienced CIT Officers
 - Community legal system professionals
 - Persons with mental illness

VA Medical Center Memphis CIT Training

- 1. PTSD didactic**
- 2. Combat Veterans and CIT officers dialogue at VAMC Memphis**
- 3. Traumatic Brain Injury didactic**
- 4. Introduction to Verbal Skills didactic**
- 5. Verbal skills building exercises**
- 6. Crisis de-escalation training**
- 7. Ride-along with CIT Officers**
- 8. In-service Training**

Combat Veterans and MPD/CIT Dialogue

- 1. Combat Veterans talk with police officers about how persons with post traumatic stress (PTSD) might present in crisis situations and make suggestions for successful crisis intervention.**
- 2. Veterans share their personal experiences and knowledge of PTSD to assist police officers in protecting themselves against PTSD.**
- 3. Police officers have an opportunity to interact with Veterans diagnosed with PTSD in a non-crisis situation thereby decreasing stigma associated with PTSD.**

Combat Veteran in Crisis

- **Maintain Officer Safety**
- **Show respect**
- **Ask if the person is a Veteran**
- **Validate and thank Veteran for service**
- **Attention to officer body language**
- **Speak at slower rate and using softer tone**
- **Use restatement**
- **Use de-escalation strategies**
 - **Orient to present**
 - **Tell Veteran if you are about to move**
 - **Decrease distractions**
 - **Radio, television**
 - **Disruptive bystanders**
 - **Take your time**
 - **Allow the Veteran time to think**
 - **Have Veteran repeat what you have said**
 - **Offer help by providing options**

Veterans: Members of Our Community



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