

Phase III Implementation Plan: The Policy Team began the Phase II activities by mapping the Yamhill County criminal justice system, reviewing key decision points in which evidence-based decisions could be implemented for system improvements. The Team ultimately agreed to focus on three key decision points: Pre-Trial, Sentencing, and Programming. Special Needs was a fourth topic selected by the group that relates to all decision points. After much discussion, these goals were decided upon because the Team felt they were areas where improvement were most needed and results could be promptly realized. Additionally, given our current available data systems, these areas of focus are tangible and measureable.

Current research suggests that structured assessment tools can assist to predict pre-trial misconduct and risk of re-offense more effectively than professional judgment alone. According to our collected local data, 56% of the pre-trial population incarcerated in the Yamhill County Jail is low risk based on the PROXY Assessment Tool. The pre-trial workgroup plans to increase victim and public safety through the effective use of assessments tools to inform pre-trial release decisions and effective condition setting. In doing so, we can reduce harm to low-risk defendants who can be managed safely in the community by reducing unnecessary pre-trial detention. Through our use of the Virginia Pre-Trial Risk Assessment Tool, we plan to efficiently manage fiscal costs by reducing unnecessary detention, pre-trial misconduct, and failure to appear rates. We also plan to use assessment information to determine the necessity for, and type of, pre-trial supervision.

Yamhill County is one of the few counties in Oregon to maintain a state employed Pre-Trial Release Officer. However, he does not currently utilize a pre-trial risk assessment tool to assist in determination of who is detained or held in jail on pre-trial status. Due to the poor state economic forecast, this position is currently in jeopardy and may be cut. Should this occur, pre-

trial decisions will be made by Sheriff's Office jail staff. Implementation of the Virginia Pre-Trial Risk Assessment Tool to augment pre-trial release decision-making will be beneficial, regardless of which agency performs this function.

Additional objectives for the pre-trial workgroup are to implement a "Second Look" process to re-assess those individuals initially detained at arraignment. We also intend to implement a court appearance reminder process and to identify available community programs that could reduce and manage risk as well as provide defendants with incentives for positive change. There are some concerns about available staffing to implement these changes. However, through some creative adjustments and workload shifts between agencies, we have both the willingness and capacity to make these improvements to pre-trial services. Our Presiding Judge is particularly motivated to make these improvements.

Structured assessment tools are more predictive of risk to re-offend than professional judgment alone. Recidivism rates can be reduced by as much as 30% when interventions are focused on medium and high risk offenders who receive appropriate behavior changing programming based on their individualized criminogenic needs. Furthermore, referrals should be based upon a match between offenders' needs and program services. Although criminogenic risk/needs assessments are completed by Community Corrections post sentence for case plans, mandated court-ordered conditions of supervision often contradict them. Routinely, probation officers focus on court mandates rather than assessment-based risks and needs. Consequently, current referral rates to evidence-based programming are as low as 50% for medium to high risk offenders. As a result of these findings, the sentencing workgroup plans to improve condition setting, moving away from condition "packages" based on crime type. Instead, we will tailor probation conditions based on criminogenic risk and need factors. We now plan to complete

static and dynamic risk/needs assessments prior to sentencing in order for the Court to use this information to impose supervision conditions. The assessment information will be summarized on a new form called the “Case Analysis” report (see “Additional Information”) which will be forwarded to the Court, prosecution, and defense prior to sentencing. The Case Analysis will also assist staff in making appropriate referrals to the applicable cognitive-behavioral programs, targeting the top four criminogenic risk/need factors. Proposed changes to the sentencing process required a significant amount of agreement and collaboration between our agency partners. Through our Policy Team, we have secured the necessary support from the Court, prosecution, and defense.

The sentencing workgroup also plans to increase use of diversion and early disposition programs for low risk offenders. Further use of assessments will assist to determine bench probation eligibility as well as appropriate conditions of supervision for this population. We plan to target the top four criminogenic risk/need factors for medium to high risk offenders while continuing to utilize risk management and restorative conditions as appropriate. Our capacity to implement these improvements is expanded because we will divert low risk offenders from entering the system and avoid their unnecessary supervision.

Research indicates that cognitive behavioral programs are most effective for higher risk offenders. Low risk offenders are actually more likely to recidivate with programming and over-supervision. Through the programming decision point, we plan to reduce recidivism in community corrections felony populations by enhancing current available evidence-based treatment resources. Programming will be dedicated to medium to high risk offenders. Further, programs will increase their focus directly on criminogenic needs, the traits that are directly related to criminality. We plan to ensure a continuum of local programming options that provide

more effective individualized risk and need based treatment services. Due to changes to our sentencing procedure, we also anticipate making adjustments to our programming menu to address capacity and risk-based dosage issues. We recognize that supervision without programming does not reduce re-offense rates, but actually negatively impacts recidivism.

Additionally, we intend to increase our exchange of information between supervision and treatment agencies upon treatment referral. Program fidelity will be maintained through the use of the Correctional Program Checklist and maintenance of a “satisfactory” rating for each program. A continuous quality improvement (CQI) process will also be applied in Community Corrections. We recognize we may have limited resources to immediately satisfy newly identified treatment content, capacity, and dosage requirements. However, this process has allowed the Policy Team to determine action steps required to meet overall objectives to close current gaps in services.

In 2010, Yamhill County stakeholders developed a Special Needs Task Force to address the interests of special needs populations involved with the criminal justice system. This work was incorporated into the EBDM Initiative. A significant action step in our plan is to implement screening tools for all inmates at the jail booking process, consisting of the Brief Jail Mental Health Screen, the TCU Substance Abuse Assessment, and the Hawaii PROXY Risk Assessment Tool. These screening tools will be utilized for early identification of risk/needs, programming needs, and pre-release planning. The assessment information will also assist in data-driven management. We will have the ability to see overall correlations between risk and needs in order to assist in strategic decision making. Further, these assessment tools will assist to identify special needs populations for whom service referrals and alternative incarceration options can be offered to prevent entrance into and continued involvement with the criminal justice system. In

this manner, per the implications of research, criminal justice resources will be allocated to those offenders who are both high need and high risk to recidivate.

Increased information sharing between service and criminal justice agencies as well as continued crisis intervention training for line staff will serve to minimize unnecessary use of criminal justice resources for special needs populations. In addition to early identification of needs, we plan to divert special needs populations to resources such as community housing and crisis-intervening alternatives to incarceration. The Yamhill County Court Coordinated Services (CCS) was created specifically to address special needs. We plan to review eligibility criteria for our mental health court and fully utilize existing capacity accessible there. In doing so, the workgroup will reduce initial arrest rates of special needs persons to divert them to available community resources for crisis intervention, housing, and medication management. Another outcome will be the reduction of the duration of jail incarceration of special needs individuals as well as reduction in the number of special needs individuals who are re-arrested because their risk and need factors are not initially addressed.

Although Yamhill County is relatively small in size and resources, we have the benefit of a long history of close collaboration. During our experience in Phase II, we found that our collaboration as a Team has increased dramatically. New partners joined our Policy Team and new collaborative relationships have been built. Support and buy-in for the Initiative has grown dramatically with most team members. Although, we lost the direct participation of the City Police Chiefs, we recognize that we have ultimately gained stronger partnerships county-wide. Stakeholders appear to embrace evidence-based concepts learned through Phase II more readily than in the beginning. Yamhill County is at a critical stage for system change and is in an outstanding position to benefit from Phase III of the Evidence-Based Decision Making Initiative.