Caring People Dedicated to Quality Service

Tod Citron, Chief Executive Officer
Hill Country MHDD Centers

Jail Diversion Centers

Local Mental Health and Behavioral Health Authorities

Map Source: Behavioral Health Services, Center for Health Statistics
Agency Analytics Unit, GIS Team, September 2023

Hill Country
MHDD
since
1997
Schleicher
Menard
Mason
Llano
Sutton
Kimble
Gillespie
Blanco
Hays
Kerr
(16 beds)
Kendall
Comal
(16 beds)
Val Verde
Edwards
Real
Bandera
Kinney
Uvalde
(32 beds)
Medina

Office of Forensic Coordination

Improve forensic service coordination and prevent and reduce justice involvement for people with MI and SUD through statewide and cross-agency initiatives that improve coordination and collaboration among state and local leaders.

- State and Local Planning
- Policy and Staffing for the Joint Committee on Access to Forensic Services
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Research and Data Analysis
- Engagement, Education, and Coordination

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Mental Illness and Substance Use in Jails

Key Stats	
5	Percent of the **Texas population** has a Serious Mental Illness (SMI).
39	Percent of **people booked into Texas county jails** who have been in contact with the public mental health system in the last three years.
72	Percent of people with SMI in jail who have a **co-occurring substance use disorder** (national estimates)
92	**Prevalence of trauma** (experience of assault or sexual abuse) among people with Serious Mental Illness in Jail (national estimates)

Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan
Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System Continuity of Care Query, 2021
Steadman, Osher, Robbins, Case, & Samuels, 2009; Teplin, 1990
Teplin, Abram, & McClelland, 1996; Abram, Teplin, & McClelland, 2003

Identified Barriers and Opportunities

Despite diversion being a priority for more than 60% of Law Enforcement survey respondents, major barriers exist such as access to diversion resources **(a place to go)** and time lost to diversion vs. booking.

Diversion Centers are intended to address Law Enforcement barriers to diversion.

Barriers to Diversion

Pre-Arrest Diversion

Pre-arrest diversion programs are designed to reduce the number of people arrested and placed in jail by giving law enforcement discretion to divert people with MI or SUD for low-level misdemeanors or nonviolent criminalized behaviors. Instead of issuing punishments, these diversion programs connect people to support and services that address underlying needs.

Aligning Services Towards a Common Goal

Diversion Centers

Diversion Centers serve as an alternative location for law enforcement to drop off adults ages 18 or older with mental illness or a co-occurring disorder who are at-risk of arrest.

Services typically include mental health screening and crisis assessment, safety monitoring, medication management, and service coordination.

Operating Centers:

- Tarrant County Diversion Center
- Judge Ed Emmett Mental Health Diversion Center, Harris County
- Williamson County Diversion Center

Under Development:

- Bell County, Central Counties Services
- Howard County, West Texas Centers
- Nueces County, Nueces MHID
- Kauffman County, North Texas Behavioral Health Authority

Continue to Leverage Existing Resources

Source: Behavioral Health Crisis and Diversion from the Criminal Justice System: A Model for Effective Community Response, Health Management Associates, 2020

How can you continuously enhance existing resources and relationships in your community?

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Implement Law Enforcement Friendly Policies

The more limitations and challenges diversion centers present, the less likely police will drop off people in behavioral health crises.

Law Enforcement Friendly Policies and Practices

Clear eligibility criteria
No-refusal policies
Quick drop off (15 min or less)
Dedicated entrance and workstations
Snacks and beverages
Regular open lines of communication

"a threat to collaboration is inviting law enforcement officers to be part of the design process, but not integrating their recommendations … the facility did an entire redesign. **It took three years before police regularly starting bringing drop-offs.**" - Nick Margiotta, President of Crisis System Solutions, Retired Phoenix police officer

Source: National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care, Best Practice Toolkit, SAMHSA, 2020

What opportunities exist to increase law enforcement utilization of the diversion center?

TEXAS Health and Human Services

Diversion Center Resources

www.TXBHJustice.org

Uvalde Behavioral Health Campus

Uvalde Behavioral Health Campus

Uvalde Behavioral Health Campus

Uvalde Behavioral Health Campus

Comal County Mental Health Facility

Comal County Mental Health Facility

Thank you!