

COUNTY OF BERKS, PENNSYLVANIA

Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Program



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Continuity of Mental Health Care from Prison to Community

1. Average wait for a Forensic Mental Health bed at Norristown State Hospital over the last 3 years is 200 days with an average of 96 men on the waiting list. Individuals waiting for competency and treatment are all on one list.
2. Average wait for a bed at Wernersville State Hospital over the last 3 years has been increasing. Three years ago it was 37 days, two years ago 68 days and this past year 77 days. This year there is an average of 8 people waiting for a bed with 4 of these in the Berks County Jail System.
3. Medical Assistance (MA)
 - a. The individual is disenrolled from MA upon incarceration. Once released, paperwork to reapply has to be completed. Up to 2 months can pass until the person is reenrolled and eligible to receive MA services.
 - b. Forensic Peer Specialists are currently unable to work in the jail as federal funds may not be used to pay for treatment while incarcerated. Peers would build relationships, identify supports in the community and develop Wellness Recovery Action Plans (WRAP).
4. Limited Base funds available – decreased over the past five years by \$842,875.00
5. Pretrial – Use more unsecured bail with conditions of treatment requirements to avoid or reduce jail time.
 - a. Mental Health Diversion Specialist (MHDS) met with 258 individuals in the last year, he was able to arrange unsecured bail with conditions for 52 individuals with mental health concerns. Of those 52, 6 reoffended.
 - b. Salary - \$72,481.00 for one MHDS.
6. Additional money for Mental Health Diversion Program to avoid jail time.
7. Limited resources for housing and employment supports as these are not covered under medical assistance and individuals are wary of renting/offering employment to individuals who have served time.

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