

Process and Evaluation Workgroup

Meeting Minutes

December 7, 2022

In attendance:

Rodney Brooks, Alameda County Public Defender's Office

Richard Speiglmán, Interfaith Coalition for Justice in Our Jails

Shawn Rowland, Our Road Prison Project

Arion Chapman, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency

Talia Summers, Youth Employment Partnership

Bob Britton, Interfaith Coalition for Justice in Our Jails

Rahkii Holman, Community Works

Janene Grigsby, Alameda County Probation Department

Jason Sjoberg, Alameda County District Attorney's Office

Ayana Cruz, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency

Charlie Eddie, The Urban Strategies Council

Mick Gardner, No More Tears

Robert Camp, Community Works

Jamaica Sowell, ROOTS Community Health Center

Nancy French, Alameda County Probation Department

Moses Garcia, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency

Darryl Stewart, Office of County Supervisor Nate Miley

Rickey Gains, Returning Citizens Association

Jenica Wilson, Alameda County Probation Department

Karen Escalante, San Francisco Sheriff's Department

Donald Frazier, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency

Leila Bihkak-Gutierrez, Community Works

The meeting started with introductions.

To welcome people attending for the first time, the meeting opened by explaining the purpose of the Workgroup; highlighting prior successes; and an invitation for new attendees to comment on what has been achieved and to make suggestions about how to move forward.

Summary of the Process and Evaluation Workgroup's Previous Successes

Medi-Cal Enrollment for Santa Rita Inmates:

- **Background:** Individuals entering Santa Rita Jail (SRJ) have their Medi-Cal suspended after 30 days and terminated after one year in custody.
- The initial effort (by the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in Our Jails) was to get Alameda County to designate an entity to go into the jail and enroll people in Medi-Cal in accordance with AB 720, authored by Nancy Skinner.
- The Process and Evaluation Workgroup took up the issue in 2019 after a presentation to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors by the Coalition, and before the state legislature took action to address the issue.
- County Healthcare Director, Coleen Chawla explained to the Coalition that 25,000 people were released from Santa Rita Jail in 2019. Individuals released from the jail were then identified as a target group of people to attempt to enroll in Medi-Cal.
- In the State Health and Human Services Department's 2021 version of CALAIM, a blueprint for how counties implement Health Care, the document states counties must implement a process for enrolling individuals in Medi-Cal after being released from jail.
- In response to the issue, Alameda County developed a contract with ROOTS community clinic, where the organization has a trailer outside of Santa Rita from 4 PM – 12 PM which provides services for people released, including Medi-Cal enrollment. After being released, many people want to leave jail immediately, so the enrollment numbers are low.
- There is an effort to get ROOTS a space inside SRJ, to enroll people in Medi-Cal while they are being processed for release.
- Beginning in January 2024, people with a wide variety of ailments including Mental Illness, Substance Use Disorder, HIV/AIDS and Pregnant/Postpartum must receive Medi-Cal during their final 90 days in custody.
- Enrolling people in Medi-Cal while in the jail is the best way to fulfill the CALAIM requirement.

- The question was asked how “metal illness” would be determined, since people most likely will not self-identify, the assumption, individuals would be diagnosed by jail health staff.
- It was suggested that providing the opportunity to enroll in Medi-Cal during various stages of incarceration, i.e., intake, release and when people are cited and released would yield the most success.
- The question was asked, can we target people 15-30 days prior to release. Yes, but there are many people in Santa Rita for fewer than 15 days.
- People working on this issue noted they have been impressed with the Social Services staff.
- Medi-Cal enrollment is voluntary, you can’t compel anyone to enroll.
- It was suggested advocates for Medi-Cal enrollment connect with the San Francisco jail staff who have been somewhat successful in addressing this issue.

Increasing Access to Santa Rita Jail for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals:

- Formerly incarcerated individuals working for community-based organizations with county contracts, who were assigned to do screening and intake of incarcerated clients were being denied access to Santa Rita Jail because of their prior convictions.
- In many instances the terms of the contract required hiring formally incarcerated people.
- Members of the Workgroup collaborated with The Alameda County Sheriff’s Office to amend the application process for entering the jail. Changes included, adding a place to note that you are working on an AB 109 contract, eliminating the requirement to list all prior convictions, and the development of an appeal process for people who have been denied entry into the facility.

Amending the Process to Apply for AB 109 Funding

- Numerous committees associated with AB 109 are required to fill out the Agenda Item Request (AIR) the form outlines the reason for the funding request. Often, basic information wasn’t included i.e., is this an evidence-based program, what are the expected outcomes, has the organization provided this service somewhere else etc.
- The Process and Evaluation Workgroup developed modifications to the AIR so more informed decisions can be made about awarding funding.

Expanding the Eligibility Requirements for Receiving AB 109 Services

- Other counties have expanded their eligibility requirements.
- The Workgroup met with service providers from other counties who have broader eligibility requirements to get a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges.

- Advocates for expanding eligibility were directed to develop a written proposal for the Workgroup to consider.

Summary of the discussion after the presentation of Workgroup activities:

- People are still not told why they have been denied entry into Santa Rita Jail. Some non-profit staff members approached the Sheriff asking for the criteria to be disclosed; the Sheriff still has not done so.
- The data the Probation Department misses in the decision-making process for awarding AB 109 funding is the incremental changes that occur for people enrolled in programming. The deliverables are usually a number. i.e., who received a client satisfaction survey, was someone placed in employment. The missing question is how can the County measure quality of life improvements for AB 109 clients.
- Navigators and Community Health workers are in the position to assess quality of life measurements, some non-profits collect that information even though it is not a contract deliverable. You can get a job, but how do you keep the job.
- Are we asking Probation to develop quality of life measurements, or do we want to leave it to CBOs to develop since they are individualistic in the way they work with clients.
- For example, clients showing up, or showing up more focused and ready to engage in services is a win. Organizations see those changes in clients, Probation is not asking for that information.
- There are evaluators who specialize in assessing quality of life changes from clients.
- There are quality of life measurements that have been validated.
- To understand if someone is “improving” CBO’s need to understand a client’s self -assessment.
- Some organizations use snap assessments which are a clients’ self-assessment of their strengths and challenges.
- It is important not to conflate quality of life with self-efficacy.

Development of the AB 109 Evaluation Process

- Alameda County allocates 50% of their AB 109 funds to community-based organizations, the remainder goes to specific County Departments.
- As a result of the Process and Evaluation Workgroup’s collaboration with the Probation Department the County plans to contract with an outside evaluator. The scope of the contract is to assess how the County Departments and CBOs utilize their AB 109 funds on a rotating basis. It would be too difficult to evaluate everyone

each year, since so many CBO's and departments receive funding. Therefore, each entity will be reviewed every three years.

Open Discussion Concluding the Meeting

- It was noted that the Workgroup was central in developing the County's Community Advisory Board (CAB.)
- Appreciation was expressed for the Workgroup being a place to share information and ideas.
- It was suggested that the Workgroup could develop a podcast where clients can share information as a way of evaluating quality of life improvements.
- A suggestion was made to work with the Sheriff to improve re-entry planning prior to release from Santa Rita Jail.
- It was announced that Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency is developing a Trauma Recovery Center.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM