

CHESTER COUNTY  
MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY  
COURT



"A Bridge to Recovery"

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"Mental Health Courts will allow the entire justice system to work together to determine what is best for the offender and the community at large.

They will be staffed by professionals with the experience and expertise needed to make informed and wise decisions. This concept is a win-win for both the criminal justice system and those individuals that need such assistance.

Mental Health Courts make sense, they will make our communities safer, and they will save tax dollars. And most important-they will save lives."

*-Senator Jane Orie in her 2001 testimony during the public hearing in the judiciary committee*

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### The Problem

- Approximately 5 percent of the US population has a serious mental illness. The US Department of Justice reports, however, that about 16 percent of the population in prison or jail has a mental illness.
- Nearly three-quarters of inmates with mental illness have a co-occurring substance abuse problem.
- According to a 1994 study, those released from jail who received fewer of the services that they reported to need were more likely to return to jail.
- It is estimated that 14% of the inmate population at CCP have a serious mental illness

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In January 2008, Chester County Prison identified 45 inmates with serious mental illness.

These 45 inmates constituted 257 separate lifetime commitments.

Their commitments ranged from a 1<sup>st</sup> commit to the highest being 31 commits.

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**180**

The estimated number of inmates with mental health concerns at Chester County Prison.

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**A Solution**

Specialized Court Dockets  
"The Drug Court Model"

A specialized Court docket is a therapeutically oriented judicial approach to provide court supervision and appropriate treatment for offenders.

The model promotes:

- ✓ Intensive monitoring of offender progress by the Court;
- ✓ Wrap around treatment services;
- ✓ Immediate sanctions

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## Drug Courts vs. Mental Health Courts

### SIMILARITIES

- Ongoing judicial involvement
- Use of sanctions/incentives
- Integration of services with judicial case processing
- Non-adversarial approach of prosecution & defense
- Use of drug testing
- Coordinated strategy of Court team
- Necessary coordination with community resources

### DIFFERENCES

- Level & type of sanctions
- Court atmosphere
- Intensity of case management
- Judicial demeanor
- Focus on medication compliance
- Inclusion of MH system, consumer & advocacy partners

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## Chester County Mental Health Recovery Court Goals:

- To preserve public safety
- To divert offenders with mental illness from incarceration & into community treatment
- To maintain treatment, housing, benefits & community support services for offenders with mental illness
- To support effective communication between the criminal justice and mental health systems

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## How are these goals accomplished?



- **IDENTIFY**  
Offenders appropriate for MHRC
- **ENGAGE**  
Offenders in treatment services
- **MAINTAIN**  
Offenders in needed services

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## Eligibility

An adult offender/consumer who:

- Has a diagnosis of mental illness, mental disability or is dually diagnosed with a mental illness and substance abuse;
- Is currently charged with committing a misdemeanor and/or felony in Chester County;
- Agrees to comply with MHC program requirements

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## Ineligible

Those who have an out-of-county-or-state detainer or who have committed the following crimes:

- Assault while a prisoner
- Homicide Offenses
- Sexual Offenses
- Theft by extortion with threats of violence

DUI, Drug Trafficking, Probation Violations, Aggravated Assault, Arson, Burglary, Robbery and Violation of Firearms Act offenses are reviewed on a case by case basis.

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## Referral Sources

- Police
- Jail Personnel
- Pretrial Services Staff
- Probation Officer
- Prosecutor
- Defense Attorney
- Family Member

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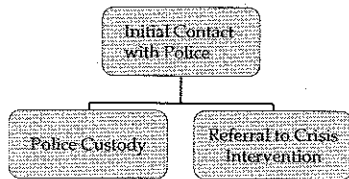
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## How it works...



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**Police Custody**  
Police complete MH Observation Form for CCP

Transport by specially trained constable or Police to CCP Intake Unit

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Offender held in CCP Intake Unit for up to 48 hours  
Brief Mental Health Screening by Prison Staff

Referral to MHRC Probation Officer

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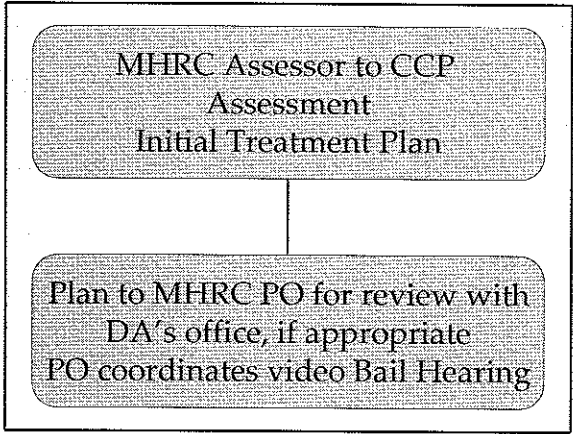
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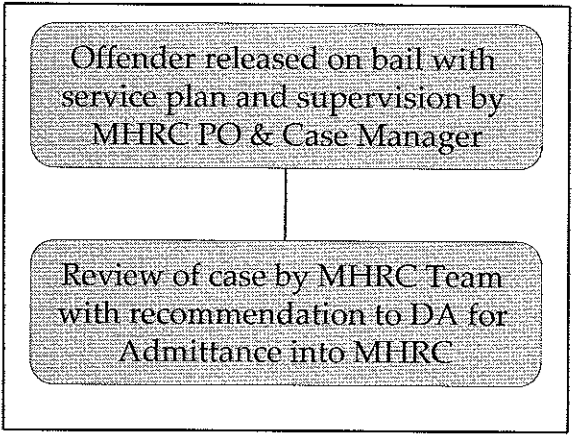
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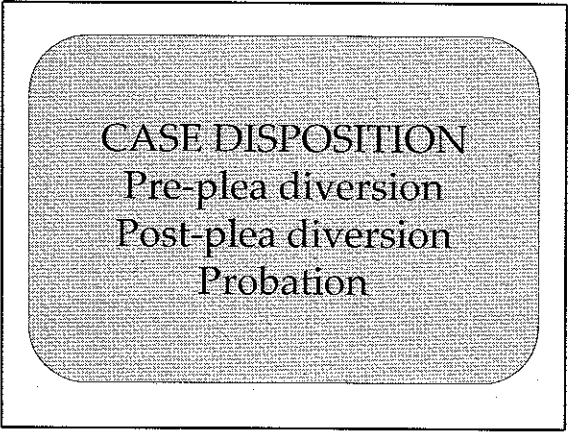
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## Supervision on MHRC

- Intensive Supervision by PO & Case Manager
- Emphasis on accountability & monitoring treatment/medication compliance
- Reinforcement Hearings with Judge at regular intervals to track progress
- Rewards for progress & sanctions for non-compliance



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*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

*~Margaret Mead*



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