



Overview of the Department of Mental Health

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Overview of the Department of Mental Health (DMH)



- DMH is the cabinet level agency and serves as the single state mental health authority for the District of Columbia.
- DMH oversees a network of community based providers that serve over 20,000 District residents.
- DMH operates Saint Elizabeths Hospital, the District's public psychiatric hospital; the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP), a 24 hour psychiatric emergency facility; and two outpatient clinics.
- A full description of DMH all of its resources can be found on the DMH web page at dmh.dc.gov.



Other DMH services



- DMH operates a mobile crisis service that is available 16 hours a day and a Homeless Outreach Program. In addition, through contract with DMH, Anchor Mental Health operates ChAMPS a mobile crisis service for youth and their families that is available 24hrs a day.
- Information on accessing all DMH services can be obtained through our 24 hours/seven day a week Access Helpline at 1-888-793-4357.
- DMH also operate the National Suicide Prevention Life Line (1-888-273-8255) and the WMATA Suicide Prevention Life Line (1-855-320-5433) 24 hours/seven days a week through the Access Helpline.



Goals of Mental Health System



- Develop a mental health system that is accessible, comprehensive and effective. A system that is focused on diverting individuals from the criminal justice system; better serving those who are incarcerated; and has strong linkages to community services.
- Accessible services include 1) competent, supportive clinicians 2) a range of community support services such as community support, medication, crisis services, vocational and other supports 3) safe and affordable housing.



Sequential Intercept Model



DMH has embraced the Sequential Intercept Model of organizing its services with the criminal justice system. This model focuses on engaging individuals in mental health services at various points of entry. This includes:

- Pre-arrest
- Pre-trial
- Services while incarcerated
- Discharge planning



Pre-Arrest



Crisis Intervention Officer (CIO) is based on the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model established in Memphis, TN and is a partnership between DMH, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). The goals of the program are to:

- Improving outcomes of police interactions with people with mental illnesses.
- Improving citizen and officer safety.
- Creating more appropriate involvement in community-based services for individuals who come to the attention of law enforcement, but do not meet the threshold for arrest.



Court-Based Services Post-Arrest



- DMH provides screenings for Pre-trial Services Agency (PSA) which recommends release conditions and makes referrals for mental health services.
- Provides medication management and intensive case management and submits reports to PSA/courts regarding treatment progress and compliance with release conditions.
- Through the Urgent Care Clinic located at Superior Court, operated by Pathways to Housing through a DMH contract, mental health and substance abuse screenings and services are provided for individuals who are known to the Community and Traffic Court, Criminal Court, Mental Health Court and Family Court.



Jail-Based Services



- At intake to DC Jail, individuals are screened for mental illness. Unity Healthcare is under contract with the DC Jail to provide mental health and Medication/ Somatic Services while in the jail, including three days of medications upon discharge.
- Names of all individuals admitted to the jail are forwarded to DMH daily. DMH checks their existing links in its data system and notifies the individual's mental health provider. Our staff ensure that the CSA sees the individual while they are in jail.
- Individuals with a mental health diagnosis who are not linked to a CSA are interviewed by DMH staff and linked prior to release.



Discharge Process



- Green Door operates the DC Linkage Plus program, under contract to DMH. DC Linkage Plus provides intensive community-based mental health services to individuals released from jail.
- Individuals in need of more intensive support are referred to Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) which offers 24 hour mental health services and supports as required.



For more information...

dmh.dc.gov