

## **Council on Mentally Ill Offenders (COMIO)**

**March 16, 2016 Meeting**

### **MINUTES**

**LOCATION:** Hyatt Regency Resort & Spa  
1 Old Golf Course Rd Monterey, CA 93940

Room: Big Sur Location on the Lower Conference Level

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

##### **COMIO Council Members**

- Jessica Cruz, NAMI California, Executive Director, The National Alliance on Mental Illness – California
- Mark Garbau, Ph.D., Chief Psychologist Forensic Services Division, California Department of State Hospitals (DHS) (representing DHS Director Pamela Ahlin)
- Brenda Grealish, Chief, Mental Health Services Division, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) (representing DHCS Director Toby Douglas)
- Manuel Jimenez, County Behavioral Health Director – Alameda
- Mack Jenkins, Retired Chief Probation Officer, San Diego County
- David Meyer, J.D., Professor, Institute of Psychiatry, Law, and Behavioral Science, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California
- Scott Kernan, Secretary, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- The Honorable Stephen V. Manley, Santa Clara Superior Court Judge
- Lester P. Pincu, D. Criminology
- Charles L. Walters, Ph.D., Law Enforcement Consultant, Orange County

##### **CDCR Staff**

- Stephanie Welch, Executive Officer, COMIO

##### **Guest Speakers**

- Toby Ewing, Executive Director, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC)
- Helene Zentner, Field Representative; Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) and Select Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Grantees (MIOCR)
- Carrie Zoller, Supervising Attorney, the Judicial Council Administration of the Courts

## Welcome and Introductions

### Adopted Meeting Minutes from January 21, 2016

**Special Guest:** Carrie Zoller, Supervising Attorney, Judicial Council of California: “The Work of the Mental Health Issues Implementation Task Force: Advancing the Progress”

Ms. Zoller provided a broad overview of the duties and responsibilities of the Judicial Council, including managing grant programs for innovative courts. Ms. Zoller provided an update on the status of the Mental Health Issues Implementation Task Force and some of its accomplishments now that the work of the taskforce has concluded.

Some example accomplishments of Taskforce:

1. Amended 10.952
2. Juvenile Competency Legislation
3. Alternative community placements for Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) legislation (which has been adopted)
4. Judicial education courses

While the sunset date for the Taskforce was December 2015, there is still interest in keeping the good works moving forward. As a result, she discussed with COMIO the areas of the report that could overlap with COMIO’s objectives and where continued work or partnership may exist.

1. Promoting prevention programs and strategies
2. Promoting the use of effective and similar screening tools
3. Promoting the need for further research or investigation in certain areas

Some of the work of the Taskforce will continue by being assigned to existing advisory committees within the Judicial Council such as collaborative courts and veterans’ courts.

**Special Guest:** Toby Ewing, Executive Director, The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC): “Update on the Investment in Mental Wellness Act and Other Opportunities to Work Collaboratively on Policy Issues Regarding the Intersection of Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health.”

Mr. Ewing shared his goal of leveraging efforts with COMIO as the MHSOAC has identified criminal justice as a policy area of interest. He also shared some of his thoughts as one of the initial authors of COMIO’s statute.

COMIO is modeled after councils that exist in others states – specifically Texas

1. COMIO should be aggressive about prevention of incarceration – including youth
2. COMIO needs a strong vision statement so that the focus of making recommendations and taking action on items is to “drive” policy change. It is not about “authority” but how to effectively influence policy.

Update on the Investment in Mental Wellness Act - While there have been some challenges there have been more great successes. For the Peer Respite grant component they have been working to demonstrate the benefits of using peers as system navigators. There are lots of lessons from the rollout of this Initiative that they are eager to learn from. The MHSOAC also wants to support county learning from innovation projects funded by MHSA. How can the MHSOAC and COMIO work together to identify innovative practices to reduce incarceration? There are examples and lessons learned out there that COMIO should work on highlighting.

**Special Guests:** Helene Zentner, Field Representative; Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) and Select Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Grantees (MIOCR)

San Luis Obispo shared their 3-prong approach to reducing incarceration: working with courts, jail treatment, and providing prescription services pre-sentencing. They noted the need for enhanced educational and engagement strategies with Judges and District Attorneys. Santa Cruz talked about their focus on pre-trial diversion strategies and how even after less than 2 months they had already saved 110 jail bed days with just 49 enrollees.

#### **Report out from Committees:**

**Diversion** – The committee has been investigating crisis beds shortage and soon will turn focus to housing needs. They are also interested in promoting the use of specialized agents to handle people with serious mental illness in jails and on supervision. This can be a joint activity with the Training Committee.

**Action Item:** Motion to provide a COMIO Best Practices Award to LA's Blueprint for Change.

**Approved**

**Training** – The committee recently heard from POST regarding the status of the roll-out of SB 11 and SB 29 which will provide more training regarding how to best interact with individuals with mental health issues. The group also talked about the importance of coordinating with the Diversion committee regarding training needs for community corrections now that there is a changing population that have more serious and challenging mental health issues serving sentences in jail or prolonged probation. The group noted the importance of learning from CDCR on this topic and will be hearing from their experts in May.

**Action Item:** Motion to provide a COMIO Best Practice Award to California Highway Patrol Mental Illness Response Program

**Approved**

**Executive Officer's Report** – Ms. Welch shared information about the resignation of original and founding member Dave Lehman, Retired Probation Chief for Humboldt County. A member since 2001, Chief Lehman was a tremendous resource and advocate for youth at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system. COMIO will explore finding a suitable way to honor his commitment in the coming

months. Significant progress is being made on the work plan in the area of relationship and capacity building, committees have started researching their activities and the juvenile justice committee chair is now Mack Jenkins. Plans for the July 20<sup>th</sup> and July 21<sup>st</sup> site visit to the Los Angeles Office of Diversion and Reentry are underway with more details to be shared in May.

### **Public Comment**

It was suggested that COMIO host an Older Adult workgroup, add peer provider resources to the website, and promote the Peace Education Programs based in LA

### **Adjourn**