



2/25/10

Dear Colleagues,

The Department of Public Welfare's Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) are pleased to announce the creation of the Pennsylvania Mental Health and Justice Center of Excellence (CoE) for the development and improvement of programs serving adults with mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system. The CoE is co-directed by Drexel University, Department of Psychology, in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Oversight of the CoE will be provided by the Mental Health and Justice Advisory Committee (MHJAC) that was established in June 2009 and functions under the PCCD committee structure. The MHJAC will advise PCCD and work with counties on issues related to the intersection of mental health and criminal justice activities, such as jail diversion and reentry programs.

The CoE will serve as a resource to counties for technical assistance and training, and provide information to promote the use of evidenced-based practices and promising practices. The CoE will also host a central repository for collected data and information on mental health/justice initiatives in Pennsylvania.

One of the CoE's initial areas of focus will be to provide training to counties on the Sequential Intercept Model and cross-systems mapping—a workshop that examines the process in counties of ways to “intercept” justice-involved persons with mental illness. To make a request for technical assistance or training please contact Ms. Judith Silva, CoE Project Coordinator, at 215.908.5351 or by email at jms566@drexel.edu.

In addition, the CoE has just launched a website that provides a wealth of mental health/criminal justice information, such as current news, data resources, web resources, a document library, a video library, and services and trainings. The website can be accessed at <http://www.pacenterofexcellence.pitt.edu/>


We strongly encourage you to use these new CoE resources and website as part of your efforts in reducing the number of persons with mental health or co-occurring substance

use disorders from entering or penetrating further into the criminal justice system, while protecting the public safety and community well-being.

Sincerely,



Linda Rosenberg
PCCD



Joan Erney, Deputy Secretary
OMHSAS