



2019 SECOND CHANCE ACT: IMPROVING REENTRY FOR ADULTS WITH CO-OCCURRING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL ILLNESS GRANTEE

Hawai'i Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division

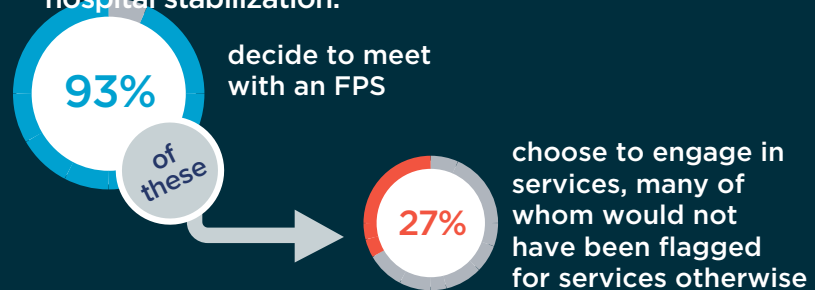
Success Story

Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH), Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) is working to reduce recidivism by engaging with a program called Hawai'i DOH New Directions Jail Diversion Program. Through New Directions Jail Diversion Program, Forensic Peer Specialists (FPS) with lived experiences with mental health disorders provide support to individuals with psychiatric and/or co-occurring challenges who are involved in the criminal justice system.

Most of the people with whom FPS engage typically refuse to engage in services; specifically, they are individuals who experience chronic homelessness and frequent police encounters/arrests. For the past two years, FPS have been providing stabilization support to these clients as they arrive at the crisis stabilization unit near a partnering hospital.

New Directions Jail Diversion Program created their approach to benefit individuals involved with the justice system by offering a more streamlined path to key services and incarceration prevention. Having the FPS engage clients at the courthouse and continue to meet with them also adds a layer of accountability and support: clients are immediately linked with a peer and can begin case management and treatment without ever going to jail.

New Directions Jail Diversion Program has had tremendous success with those who are in hospital stabilization:



A New Directions Jail Diversion Program Client Success Story

There was an FPS program participant who had experienced homelessness for 17 years and was arrested repeatedly. She agreed to talk to an FPS, and as a result, agreed to case management. By collaborating with program partners, the FPS was able to connect the client with housing, case management, health benefits, insurance, medication, and more. The client stayed in treatment for three months, then left and was rearrested. However, she returned to the FPS program upon release and now is reengaged with FPS and back on medication.



DERWIN, ONE OF THE NEW DIRECTIONS JAIL DIVERSION PROGRAM'S FORENSIC PEER SPECIALISTS



Lessons Learned

When New Directions Jail Diversion Program initially began training FPS, program staff understood the challenges FPS may face and built in opportunities for FPS to debrief and receive clinical support from the beginning, which proved to be a critical component of the program's success.

When New Directions Jail Diversion Program expanded and located FPS at the crisis stabilization

unit near the hospital, few other providers fully understood or offered the level of support that FPS needed to avoid burnout: there were no support groups for FPS to discuss challenging cases or process difficult experiences on the job. As a result, FPS left for other positions or quit working altogether. The take-home lesson from this is that the model works but that it is critical to set up the necessary supports for FPS.

What worked?

Among the promising practices of New Directions Jail Diversion Program, staff cite the following as being especially successful:

- The contractor's help planning and implementing the stabilization program and providing support to FPS
- Linking clients with FPS at the courthouse
- Shifting the model to the crisis stabilization unit near the partnering hospital in response to the courts being closed during COVID-19

What did not work?

Program staff realized that the internship for FPS was too short. The internship was designed to be three months, which was just enough time to hire participants and show them the ropes. However, staff found that FPS were just getting into the groove when their internship time was up.

Additionally, the program did not have FPS positions available to transition the FPS into upon completion of the internship. To address this, New Directions Jail Diversion Program is now hosting a yearlong internship program and creating permanent FPS positions that will offer trained, long-term FPS employment.

What's next?

In 2022, New Directions Jail Diversion Program was awarded \$800,000 from the state's legislative budget to continue and expand programming into the courts over the next two years. New Directions Jail Diversion Program will train a new round of FPS and start a train-the-trainer program for FPS who are currently serving

clients so that the program can create a larger pool of local trainers/mentors for new recruits.

Finally, New Directions Jail Diversion Program expanded internships into one-year placements (instead of three months) and interns will have the opportunity to transition into part- or full-time employment in FPS positions.

For more information, contact:

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