

# Court Assisted Recovery Effort (CARE)



# Problem Statement

- 59% of inmates in the Cochise County jail have a mental health diagnosis
- Approximately 60% of inmates are incarcerated for misdemeanor offenses
- Escalating jail costs due to incarceration of mentally ill
- Incarceration of mentally ill is not evidence-based



# History

- Mental health court established at the Sierra Vista Justice Court in 2005
- Community interest in creating a veterans court
- Diversion program would best meet needs of community
- CARe was established in July 2015



# Description

- CARE is a diversion program
- Specialized docket of criminal cases for defendants with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders
- Military veterans who meet eligibility requirements are treated within a specialized track
- Utilizes an integrated problem solving approach in lieu of more traditional criminal court procedures



# Goals

- Increase public safety
- Improve outcomes for defendants
- Divert defendants with mental illnesses from incarceration
- Make the most effective use of limited resources in the criminal justice and behavioral health systems
- Improve the quality of life for people with mental illnesses who are involved in the criminal justice system



# Eligibility Requirements

- 100% voluntary
- Actively engaged in services
- Law-abiding

# Participants

FY2016

	Referrals	Accepted	% Successful Completions
Mental health	59	41	63%
Substance abuse	11	8	25%
Veteran	13	12	75%
Total	83	61	54%

- 103 total cases
  - 20 clients had more than one case
  - Six clients had more than four cases

# Participants

FY2017

	Referrals	Accepted	% Successful Completions
Mental health	30	19	33%
Substance abuse	9	7	67%
Veteran	4	3	100%
Total	43	29	67%

- 104 total cases
  - 22 clients had more than one case
  - Five clients had more than four cases



# Community Partners

- Sierra Vista Justice Court
- Cochise County Attorney's Office
- Cochise County Public Defender
- Cochise County Probation & Juvenile Court Services  
(Adult Probation Services Division)
- Sierra Vista Police Department



# Community Partners

- Veteran's Administration
- Cenpatico
  - Arizona Counseling and Treatment Services (ACTS)
  - Southeastern Arizona Behavioral Health Services (SEABHS)
- Wellness Connection
  - Telecare



# Sierra Vista Justice Court

- Provides a mechanism to encourage positive changes in people's lives
- Simply imposing fines or jail rarely changes the behavior of people with serious mental illness or drug problems
- Upon successful completion, criminal charges are dismissed



# Public Defender

- Seeks to stabilize behavior
- Utilizes treatment plans to track progress
- Reducing number of mentally ill inmates
- County has applied for six grants since March 2015



# Attorney's Office

- No need for Rule 11 hearings/restoration of competency
- Saves county \$7,500 to \$30,000 per client
- 15% of all cases in Benson/Willcox would have been eligible for CARE



# Recidivism Rates

- New offenses committed within three months of successful completion: 6% (2/34)
- Within six months: 15% (4/25)
- Within one year: 38% (5/13)

# Success Stories

- Mr. L.
  - Mentally ill/homeless
  - Seven criminal cases prior to CARE
  - Graduated in January 2016
  - No arrests since June 2015
- Ms. S.
  - Pregnant, homeless, heroin user; in abusive relationship
  - Living with family when graduated from program
  - Participating in treatment
  - Gave birth to a healthy child



# CARe Works!

- Clients receive critical services to maintain stability and remain law-abiding
- Reduced costs to county
- Evidence-based: mentally ill are in need of services, not incarceration
- Reduction in recidivism rates