

Executive Summary Form

Agenda Number: 5999 – Scheduled for 8/31/2021 BOS Meeting

Recommendation:

Approve Memorandum of Understanding between Community Medical Services and Cochise County Detention Health, for DELIVERY OF OPIOID TREATMENT MEDICATION TO EXTERNAL FACILITY- Cochise County Adult Detention Center

Background (Brief):

The purpose of this MOU is to allow Cochise County Detention Health Staff, along with Cochise County Detention Staff and Community Medical Services (CMS) to continue medication assisted treatment for current CMS patients and initiate medication assisted treatment for patients when appropriate. Approving this MOU will allow patients who are incarcerated at Cochise County Jail to receive good care while encouraging a healthier lifestyle of those in custody and individuals who are released back into the community. Approval of this MOU will also allow Cochise County Detention Medical Services to provide a level of care that aligns with the care individuals receive while in the community.

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is the use of medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies to provide a “whole patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders. Per the National Standard of Care for jails, patients enrolled in a community substance abuse program should be given consideration to continue medication-assisted treatment while incarcerated. The National Standard of Care for jails also lists a compliance indicator as follows; “Inmates entering the facility on MAT have their medication continued, or a plan for medically supervised withdrawal is initiated”. Currently, Detention Medical’s practice is to treat inmate’s withdrawal symptoms and/or initiate medically supervised withdrawal. This is not a benefit to the inmate because it does not align with best practice, nor does this provide harm reduction, which puts the inmate at a higher risk of relapse and overdose when released. An individual’s chances of relapse and overdose are significantly higher in cases where they are rapidly detoxed from Medication Assisted Treatment rather than the continuation of treatment.

Patients with opioid use disorders who are released following long-term confinement are at high-risk for post release death from overdose. This risk can be greatly reduced by continuing Medication Assisted Treatment. Continuation of MAT and/or encouraging engagement in treatment post release can reduce recidivism and mortality.

It is essential for Cochise County Detention Health to ensure Medication Assisted Treatment is made available to pregnant women who are incarcerated. The National Standard of Care for jails states MAT, along with counseling on benefits and risks, must be available to pregnant women who have opioid use disorder. Given the risk of opioid withdrawal in pregnancy, it is advisable that all pregnant women receive MAT initiation or continuation.

Currently Cochise County Detention Health Services works with Maricopa County Detention Facility to have pregnant women with opioid use disorders held at their facility as a courtesy hold. This can become expensive to Cochise County and can also pose multiple transportation and court appearance problems. It has also recently become less of an option. Maricopa County has their own patient population to care for and are not obligated to provide these services to other Counties. It would benefit Cochise County immensely to be able to care for these individuals at the Cochise County Detention Facility and also

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provide a service to our patients that could be more easily continued within our community when they are released from jail.

Fiscal Impact & Funding Sources:

Community Medical Services is not requesting compensation from Cochise County. Community Medical Services will not attempt to bill or recoup any expenses related to services they provide to inmates housed at Cochise County Jail. There is no need for a funding source and there is no negative fiscal impact. However, there is a high possibility of a positive fiscal impact. Courtesy holds for MAT treatment would be avoided, which would eliminate the accrual of cost per day of housing an inmate in another facility and also eliminating the transportation costs accumulated with these out of County holds. The cost for care of these patients may also significantly decrease due to the lessened need to treat symptoms of withdrawal and lessen hospital visits for extreme withdrawal symptoms.

Next Steps/Action Items/Follow-up:

Your approvals are respectfully requested.

Signed MOU to be returned to the Detention Health Services Manager

Impact of Not Approving:

Pregnant patients requiring MAT will continue to require transportation to Maricopa County and will continue to accrue the costs associated with this. If Maricopa County is unable or unwilling to accept a pregnant inmate from Cochise County, all other avenues must be explored which can be time consuming, expensive and negatively impact the patient requiring care. Denial of this MOU will also negatively impact the patients who are incarcerated in the Cochise County Jail by not providing the standard of care and support. Recidivism may not increase; however, it is probable that it will **not** decrease without proper plans and support in place with continuation of this in the community after an individual is released.