



Allegheny Correctional Health Services, Inc.

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Allegheny Correctional Health Services, Inc. (ACHS) is a charitable nonprofit arm of the Allegheny County Health Department formed in 2000 with a mission of *"Quality Healthcare for Persons Remanded by the Courts to the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections"*.

Enhanced mental health care and treatment for the number one health problem of people entering the Jail (substance abuse) were early mandates for ACHS.

Mental health care was enhanced through a series of strategies beginning at the intake sallyport and continuing through discharge. Among those strategies were:

- Identification beginning at the sallyport
- Elimination of some of the historic barriers to disclosure of mental health issues
- Changing the Jail culture to allow people on psychotropic medications to live in general population and
- Expansion of staff (psychiatry and social work) particularly to add capacity for service during the first few weeks in Jail
- Elimination of records/aides positions and hiring of a mental health discharge planner
- Automatic referrals to Justice Related Services for possible Diversion, Mental Health Court, and Support services
- Weekly status sharing with Justice Related Services and ongoing meetings with supervisors
- Regular visits from Forensic Liaisons at Community Service Coordination Units
- Pre-release Medical Assistance sign-up
- Embedding of a social worker into the "general population" mental health specialty unit.
- Engaging persons with mental illness and substance abuse in the substance abuse treatment program if cleared by the psychiatrist

Substance abuse issues were also addressed through a series of strategies that included:

- Identification at the sally port and beginning detoxification in intake
 - Designating housing for persons who were detoxing and staffing with additional nursing and social work time. Jail agreed to keep people on these units until 24 hours after detox was completed.
 - With the help of a SAMSHA grant, opening a 90 day nonhospital male residential treatment program in the Jail (5MC) based on NIDA principles. This program is licensed by the state.
 - With the help of a PCCD grant, opening a less intensive male drug and alcohol education program on a unit and providing some drug and alcohol education to female inmates.
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- Establishing in-Jail and in-Community follow-up groups
 - Training and cross-training with a community provider to establish more post-release community options for inmates with substance abuse who have gone through 5 MC.
 - Planning a 3 hour 5 day a week substance abuse program for the re-entry center on level 1 and a post-release treatment program.