

MSA COST SAVINGS MEASURES –

DECEMBER 1, 2017

STATUS REPORT



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In compliance with budget language contained in line item 1599-1690 of the FY18 General Appropriations Act, the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association, on October 16, 2017, submitted substantial reporting of data related to staffing and payroll, as well as a report of cost saving measures currently being pursued by the various sheriffs' offices during FY18. Sheriffs submitted details of various efforts they have been undertaking at each of their offices to reduce costs and increase efficiencies, and introduced a number of areas in which the MSA might be able to collaborate and collectively address the cost of county corrections operations. In that document, the MSA committed to report on its progress by December 1, 2017.

Following the submissions of October 16, all reports were shared with each sheriff's office to allow each to review the efforts undertaken across the state. Each sheriff was asked to review those reports with an eye towards adopting additional savings activities and practices borrowed from their colleagues. After this period of review, a conference call was hosted by the MSA for the chief financial officers from each sheriff's office on November 15 and a full-day workshop was held at the Middlesex County Sheriff's Training Academy building on November 28. Medical and mental health directors were also asked to hold their own workshop on that same date. The purpose of this call and these workshops was to collectively formulate savings initiatives for the MSA. The structure of these sessions followed the agenda outlined by the budget language.

For the purpose of continuity, this update will follow the structure of the original MSA Cost Saving Measures filing.

A) DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE PERSONNEL INITIATIVES, INCLUDING REDUCING OVERTIME COSTS AND THE RATIO OF PERSONNEL TO SUPERVISORS

- As mentioned in the original report, the MSA has sought to achieve efficiencies and reduce staff needs by collaborating on training, both in the officer training academies and in-service review. The MSA Education and Training Committee has completed work over the past few years to institute a uniform, core basic recruit training academy curriculum for all sheriffs' offices across the state which insures that all county correctional officers in Massachusetts receive a uniform level of instruction in the training academy, and allows basic recruit training academies to be run regionally. The ETC is now working on expanding regional training opportunities and creating more formal regional training academies. This effort has begun with the MSA currently working to develop a curriculum and uniformly train all of its drill instructors to the latest industry standards.
- In the earlier report, the MSA stated that it believed that overtime costs and the ratio of personnel to supervisors could be addressed more immediately if sheriffs had an option to encourage some of their senior supervisors and officers to retire early and then replacing some percentage of those officers with entry-level corrections officers. This would favorably affect

the ratio of officers to supervisors, reduce total salaries, and provide the additional officers needed to reduce overtime. After several discussions on this topic, the MSA would like to request an opportunity to discuss the idea of a targeted ERIP with budget analysts and policy makers. Sheriffs' offices have been offering financial incentives to encourage senior staff to retire, but those efforts seem to be exhausted. The MSA believes further incentives would need to include an ERIP, targeted to a limited number of staff, and allowing the hiring of some new corrections officers. Sheriffs would also like to allow each individual office to opt-in to such a program, as some counties do not think they could achieve a savings due to ongoing vacancies and staff turnover. The MSA continues to be willing to work with, and to provide data to, the Administration and the Legislature to help construct the most effective parameters of an ERIP.

- Video conferencing court sessions was offered in the last report as another opportunity to save on staff and overtime costs. While most every sheriff has the technological capability to facilitate these video sessions, there are only a few counties in which the courts are currently willing to utilize this format. The sheriffs' offices that have had success in using these video sessions are currently working to quantify the savings they have realized to date. The MSA will forward this data once it is available.

B) CONSOLIDATING INMATE MEDICAL AND OTHER VENDOR SERVICES

Savings Initiatives for Vendor Services

Much of the time spent in the recent CFO workshop was focused on the potential consolidation of vendor services and ways to reduce the impact of inmate medical care on county corrections spending. Many of the ideas generated require improved communication among the sheriffs' offices, some rely upon improved technological resources, and some may need the participation of other state agencies to achieve success. In addition to combined effort to review and evaluate all the saving initiatives submitted in the last report, the MSA worked with the Office of the State Comptroller to provide the CFOs with a complete list of all contracts and vendors used by sheriffs in FY17. This information is being analyzed and will be used to pursue joint or regional procurements that will leverage the combined purchasing power of all of the sheriffs.

Following the CFO workshop held this week, the MSA is now scheduling a day-long session for the procurement and budget staffs from each office. The training will take place during the second week of January and is intended to coordinate the efforts to increase collaboration among offices. The MSA plans to achieve the following as an outcome of that meeting:

- A page is being organized for the state's Wiki site which the MSA will host. The page will host bids and contracts being used by each of the sheriffs, details on those contract requirements and a schedule of contract dates. This will allow offices to compare contracts and align service dates to allow offices to pursue collective procurements and bulk purchases in the future.
- The shared document environment of the Wiki will also include a listing of all equipment (law enforcement, medical, training or facility maintenance) and other resources available at each sheriff's office. Sharing these resources or transferring ownership outside of the state surplus list may provide opportunities to reduce purchase and lease costs for many of these items, as well as allow for pooled maintenance services. The resources will also include opportunity to

jointly pursue certain contracted staff, such a doctor or per diem employees, or to allow counties to offer to schedule offenders from other jurisdictions for certain medical equipment, such as dialysis machines.

- The Wiki will also allow the MSA to monitor the utilization of state contracts by sheriffs' offices. At the same time, sheriffs' offices believe there may be opportunities for sheriffs to beat the prices included with state contracts when certain bulk purchases are made. It is hoped that OSD will allow the sheriffs the latitude to pursue such actions.
- Procurement policies will be reviewed at the workshop to ensure that, whenever possible, future contract bids will be solicited as open to all sheriffs so any MSA member can utilize a favorable contract. New language will be proposed for the policies that will allow and encourage contract adjustments, which will facilitate allow the greatest opportunity for sheriffs' offices to procure together.
- Additional training will take place to make sure that procurement and MMARS activities reduce errors and include all necessary data captures so that future tracking of procurements is possible.
- As mentioned previously, the MSA has obtained a report of all the contracts used at each office over the past fiscal year. This report will be used to specify which are procurements are made off a state contract, and which are done under different terms. Offices not using a state contract for any particular good or service shall investigate the possibility of joining the state contract or collaborate with other sheriffs' offices to explore if a collective procurement might yield increased purchasing power and greater savings.
- The report from the Comptroller allows offices using the same vendor or purchasing the same goods or services to see the other offices that are doing the same. At the CFO workshop, the group was able to review the top 150 purchases by the sheriffs' offices that did not use a state contract to determine if best practices were being followed. Most of these charges were found to be for leases, medical care, department chargebacks, and municipal water/sewer. Approximately 25 of these transactions were not in these categories, and all but one of these had gone out for bid. Most were for bulk food purchases. The Comptroller's spreadsheet will be further utilized at the upcoming workshop to promote regional procurements and to allow offices that share the same vendor to create a procurement team.

Savings Initiatives for Inmate Medical Services

In the workshop held with the medical directors and mental health directors, attendance was limited to employees of the sheriff, given the conflict that might have been involved by including the privately contracted medical vendors. These health services staff formulated several initiatives aimed at finding savings while sustaining or improving the available medical services. A number of suggestions from this team are internal to the MSA, but the group has also made other suggestions related to area such as Mass Health, the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, and the State Office of Pharmacy (SOPS).

- Health Services will work with procurement to improve the purchasing of medical supplies, increase bulk purchasing, and forcing vendors to compete on pricing. Likewise, the group will look to develop an agreement to reduce the number of vendors/providers for certain costly

services such as dialysis. The group will also look to more extensively use medical supply surplus lists available at the state and national level.

- The Wiki will be used to maintain list of healthcare services or specialties that might be shared among counties such as x-ray, dialysis or hospice. Such an effort may also lead to options that allow more specialties, such as OB and PT, to be brought in-house and shared more often. This would save costs, but also significantly reduce the security staff and overtime costs involved with transporting and staying with inmates at various hospitals and clinics.
- Health Service Administrators (HSAs) are going to develop protocols that can increase the communication between sheriffs' offices and provide more consistency with the transfer of offender medical records and medications. In addition, efforts will be made to increase the collaboration with families and health centers on determining medication needs and exhausting all available resources to get those necessary medications.
- Sheriffs' offices will work to also utilize local resources more efficiently to find less expensive medical services. HSAs will make a plan to increase the use of local hospitals and colleges to obtain services at reduced costs, and then meet with their local emergency departments to improve continuity of care and to decrease the incentives for offenders to pursue non-clinical reasons to seek hospital visits. This is often done by getting the hospital to agree to not provide the offender with any perks not available at the facility, such as televisions and comfort items.
- Staffing can also be improved by recruiting at the local level and, as mentioned previously, by creating regionalized, shared, per-diem pools for clinical positions.
- With some technical support, these medical professionals believe that costs can be cut and treatment improved. They would like to see the development of a secure means of communicating across counties through a portal accessed by health care staff. This will allow all offices to cut down on duplicate services and ensure the continuity of care. They would also like to see such a system allow the accessing of US Labs and Mobile X data at each county. Finally, such a system would greatly lend itself to creating a pilot program for telemedicine, which has a great potential for cost savings.
- One of the more significant impacts of the inmate medical budget is the unpredictability of treatment costs, especially for the treatment of Hepatitis C. The MSA would like to see Mass Health develop a program, similar to the one previously used to reduce the cost impact of AIDS/HIV medications. Finding a way for Mass Health to cover the treatment for Hep C will reduce the volatility of medical costs in county facilities.
- Another way to reduce inmate medical costs at the county level would be for the Commonwealth to improve resources at the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital. There is currently insufficient bed space for county inmates, requiring more expensive stays at other hospitals. In addition, the Shattuck has been reducing their specialty clinics due to budget issues, and this means that community providers must be utilized at a higher cost. When there is a bed opening for a county offender, the limited correctional resources means that staffing and overtime costs are considerable as the hospital makes substantial security demands of the sheriffs' office.
- HSAs agree that they are currently handcuffed by the requirement that all sheriffs' offices use SOPS for pharmacy services. Sheriffs have long argued that most of them could obtain better pricing for their pharmacy products if they were able to purchase their medications and supplies at places other than SOPS. Many feel that the prices are often higher than from other sources

and the administrative fees are an additional cost they would not otherwise carry. In addition, the return of medication is cumbersome, with reimbursements lower than other vendors. The MSA would like to ask for the consideration to allow sheriffs to opt out of using SOPS if they are able to generate greater savings by doing so.

HRCMS Scheduling Tool

The final savings initiative to present at this time is to request an initiative to investigate the use of scheduling software that works with HRCMS. Having a tool that can handle the unique scheduling needs of a 24/7 agency like a sheriff's office would aid in the reduction of staff need for overtime. A scheduling module in HRCMS would allow for the more efficient use of personnel, reduce staff levels through the introduction of interim shifts and diverse weekly schedules. Such a system could also automate the process for when additional staff is needed.

C) ESTABLISHING UNIFORM STANDARDS AND PROGRAMMING ACROSS OFFICES

The MSA is still attempting to undertake an effort to develop a consensus around the establishment of uniform standards and programming across all offices. Working groups of custody, medical, mental health and programming continue to meet in an attempt to collaborate on a uniform description of the primary care and custody operation across all offices. In turn, these efforts will then be review by a committee of facility superintendents and given final approval by the sheriffs. The MSA respectfully requests your patience on this substantial request. We would hope to provide you with an updated report by early February, as our meetings conclude.