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Senator Michael Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon Street, State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Rodrigues,

I am writing this letter in accordance with Chapter 28, line item 8910-1010, of the Acts of 2023, which directs me to prepare a report on the operations of a Regional Evaluation and Stabilization Unit (ESU) located inside the Hampden County Correctional Center (HCCC), and the Western Massachusetts Regional Women's Correctional Center (WMRWCC) Evaluation and Stabilization Units (ESU). These units are designed to serve mentally unstable inmates of the counties of Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester.

The ESU's in Hampden and Middlesex counties are regional facilities for all Sheriff's Departments to utilize. The ESU/ESP is a short term program, (up to 14 days), designed to stabilize justice involved individuals in psychiatric crises due to mental health or environmental stressors, in need of medication stabilization, increased support or close observation to assist in managing the offender at the correctional facility and to decrease the commitments to the state psychiatric hospital. Hampden County and Middlesex County mental health services currently utilize standard definitions from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and common criteria for ESU admission and discharge. Mental health service providers from Hampden, Middlesex and the other counties continue to meet quarterly to collaborate on mental health services provided at the county correctional facilities.

The correctional system continues to see an increase in chronicity of mental health issues in individuals detained or sentenced in the correctional institutions. Many offenders enter the correctional system destabilized due to chronic mental health symptoms, off psychotropic medication, detoxing, or situational issues. Most mental health emergencies are generated in the early part of an offender's incarceration, but some are due to ongoing chronic mental health issues that are difficult to stabilize. The Mental Health Services at HCCC and WMRWCC manage and treat individuals with chronic mental health issues with a coordinated effort between correctional and mental health staff. The mental health clinician assesses an offender's mental status and level of risk, and determines what crisis intervention or treatment/care is needed. The goal of the mental health service is to stabilize the offender to function in population, decrease psychiatric commitments, to participate in treatment/programming, maintain stabilization prior to their return to the community and ultimately to increase public safety.

Continued increase in the use of the ESU/ESP is significant for a low number of 18A psychiatric commitments to state hospitals from the HCCC. HCCC had 10 commitments and WMRWCC had 9 commitments in fiscal year 2023. The ESU/ESP continues to have a significant impact on the state by alleviating the caseload of incarcerated offenders at the psychiatric state facilities; producing cost savings (see statistical report for details of cost savings.)

Mental health service providers in the other county correctional facilities (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Worcester) can directly refer male offenders to the HCCC ESU by calling the HCCC Mental Health Director or Clinical Supervisor to arrange for the transfer. When an ESU out-of-county offender is stabilized, the Mental Health Director or Clinical Supervisor connects with the mental health service provider at the referring facility to make recommendations and review the mental health plan, and the offender is returned to the original county and mainstreamed back into general population.

In addressing the deficiencies of mental health services (Section (E) of Chapter 38 8910-1010) for incarcerated women, the in-patient Evaluation Stabilization Program, located within a secured treatment housing unit at the WMRWCC, serves those who are either at imminent risk of harm to self or others, in psychiatric crisis, or are at-risk of clinical decompensation. The goals of the ESP program are inmate safety, stabilization, and re-integration to general population, all contributing to avoiding inmate 18A hospitalizations. The scope of ESP services includes daily observation, evaluation/risk assessment, and staff consultation. In house respites were incorporated in each of the general population living units, to assist and support the women within those units who are in need of increased support due to mental health or situational/adjustment issues.

HCCC and WMRCC mental health services provide ongoing mental health treatment for offenders in the ESU/ESP or in general population. These mental health services and treatments include referral and assessment for ESU/ESP admission, respite, diagnostic evaluation, risk assessment, medication clinic and referrals, symptom and medication monitoring/management, ongoing support, follow up support/treatment post discharge from the ESU/ESP, and collaboration with community providers to assist with transitioning back into the community. Identification, referral, treatment and ongoing monitoring play critical roles in preventing suicide as well as decreasing the commitments to the state psychiatric hospital. Mental health services provided at the HCCC and WMRWCC have decreased the risk of injury to correctional staff and offenders and help to maintain and achieve state standards for mental health care for offenders and enhance public safety.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Cocchi
Sheriff

Hampden County Sheriff's Office- Main Institution

Fy2023 Evaluation and Stabilization Unit Statistics

ESU Admits	328
ESU Admits DMH	202
Total Admits	530
ESU Respite	113
ESU DMH Respite	37
Total Respite	150
Amount of Bed Days	2491
Minimum Stay	1
Maximum Stay	33
Average Stay	4.5
18a Transfers	10
Referral by County	-
Hampden	524
Middlesex	0
Berkshire	3
Franklin	14
Worcester	7
Essex	0
Norfolk	1
Hampshire	1
Total Out of County	26

Reason for Admission	
Psychosis	106
Suicidal ideation/Plan/Intent	138
Homicidal ideation/Plan/Intent	11
Medication Evaluation	136
Hospital Returnees	70
Mood Instability/Depression	133
Decompensated	60
Substance Induced Symptoms	28

Hampden County Sheriff's Office- Western Massachusetts Regional Women's Correctional Facility

Fy2023 Evaluation and Stabilization Unit Statistics

ESU Admits	181
ESU Admits DMH	55
Total Admits	236
ESU Respite	0
ESU DMH Respites	0
Total Respites	0
Amount of Bed Days	1037
Minimum Stay	1
Maximum Stay	27
Average Stay	4.8
18a Transfers	9
Referral by County	-
Hampden	102
Middlesex	0
Berkshire	20
Franklin	4
Worcester	89
Essex	0
Norfolk	0
Hampshire	17
Barnstable	4
Total Out of County	134

	Budget	Bed Days	Ave/day	Cost/day
FY2012	905,441	2,977	8.16	\$ 304.15
FY2013	867,282	1,686	4.62	\$ 514.40
FY2014	879,840	2,257	6.18	\$ 389.83
FY2015	993,035	3,149	8.63	\$ 315.35
FY2016	1,081,487	3,106	8.51	\$ 348.19
FY2017	1,081,487	2,123	6.07	\$ 509.41
FY2018	1,087,493	2,402	5.47	\$ 452.74
FY2019	1,091,698	2,568	7.04	\$ 425.12
FY2020	1,091,246	2,561	7.02	\$ 426.10
FY2021	1,223,650	2,669	7.31	\$ 458.47
FY2022	1,390,470	3,576	9.80	\$ 388.83
FY2023	1,390,470	3,528	9.67	\$ 394.12