

**May 02, 2024**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-**

**Update:** MHID's 32 bed diversion center soon to be located at 1630 S Brownlee, Corpus Christi Texas will officially have a groundbreaking ceremony on May 23, 2024 at 10am. The contractor is KJM Commercial Inc, dba Victory Building Team of Corpus Christi Texas, and the architectural firm is Levy Dykema, Corpus Christi Texas. The diversion center will officially open in the year 2025.

## **Nueces Center for Mental Health and Intellectual Disability's (MHID) Community Collaborative Programs Continue to Provide Life Changing Services for Justice Involved Residents of Nueces County**

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas--Developed by Nueces Center for Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities (MHID), in collaborative partnership with Nueces County, and funded by Nueces County Hospital District (NCHD). These collaborative programs have provided an unprecedented system of mental health and substance use treatment access and support to address the growing mental health needs for the citizens of Nueces County.

These services began in August of 2018 and were born out the recognition by local leadership that our community was and continues to face challenges in addressing the needs of justice involved persons with mental illness and substance abuse issues. As the Local Mental Health Authority for Nueces County, MHID was approached and rose to the request of the County to design and implement programming to address these needs. MHID proposed the creation of 3 core programs initially, and with unanimous approval from County Commissioners and Late County Judge Lloyd Neal, the community collaborative project was born.

Initially consisting of 3 core programmatic components, Post Arrest Jail Diversion, Crisis Intervention Teams, and Jail Based Competency Restoration. The programs achieved rapid results, serving hundreds of individuals, and saving over \$3,000,000.00 (estimated) in unnecessary incarcerations and hospitalizations in the first year alone. Over the last five years the collaborative has served thousands of individuals and saved millions on unnecessary incarceration and hospitalizations.

As a result of the success realized, and to continue to improve access to care and bridge the gap for justice involved persons living with substance use and mental health disorders. The Collaborative Project was expanded in March of 2021, to include the creation of two new programs and to expand Crisis Intervention Teams. These new programs bolstered the collaborative, provided long term comprehensive outpatient services for the most ill persons involved in the criminal justice system, and provided for the first time, an on demand walk in crisis clinic that provides access within 15 minutes to a prescribing psychiatric provider.

On August of 2022, Nueces County Commissioners and Judge Scott voted unanimously to award MHID the funding necessary to create the crisis Diversion Center at 1630 S. Brownlee Blvd. This Building will provide up to 32 beds of enhanced crisis respite services with integrated on-site primary care and substance use treatment access for individuals served through MHID's crisis services system. This facility will be one of the most comprehensive diversion centers in the state of Texas.

### **The Nueces County Community Collaborative Project consists of the following programs.**

#### **Post Arrest Jail Diversion**

In partnership with the District Attorney's office and Sheriff's Office, Jail Diversion serves to identify and divert individuals with mental illness from the Nueces County Jail who are deemed appropriate for diversion by the District Attorney's office. These are individuals identified as having significant mental health issues which have contributed to their interaction with the criminal justice system. Upon approval for the program individuals are released on a personal recognizance bond with conditions to participate in mental health treatment.

Individuals who do not participate in treatment or who recidivate are returned to custody and their charges are reinstated.

### **Jail Based Competency Restoration**

In partnership with the County Jail, Sheriff's Office, and District Attorney's Office, The Jail Based Competency Restoration program serves to restore competency to individuals deemed incompetent to stand trial as a result of their mental illness. The program allows for restoration services to occur rapidly and efficiently so that eligible individuals are not languishing in jail awaiting a state hospital bed. Restoration time for our program pre COVID-19 averages 39 days. This contrasts with the wait time average of 196 days for a state hospital bed, and another 6-8 months for restoration once these individuals are granted a bed at a state facility.

### **Crisis Intervention Teams**

In partnership with CCPD, NCCO, and Cenikor, CIT provides rapid response, assessment and linkage to ongoing care for persons with mental illness and substance abuse who are interacting with law enforcement. The team consists of crisis intervention trained officers and MHID's mental health professionals. The teams respond to mental health related calls coming in through the 911 system and directly over the radio at law enforcement request. These teams are a critical component which provides a mechanism to reroute individuals from arrest/incarceration into respite services with the Center, substance abuse treatment at Cenikor, or ongoing outpatient treatment at the point of potential arrest. Without CIT intervention, most of these individuals would not have been able to access care and would have ended up in jail or inpatient care. Many of these individuals have engaged in treatment thanks to the response, outreach, and follow up of the CIT teams.

### **Forensic Assertive Community Treatment**

An intensive interdisciplinary treatment service designed to improve clients' mental health outcomes and daily functioning; diverts individuals in need of treatment away from the criminal justice system; manages costs by reducing reoccurring arrest, incarceration, and hospitalization; and increases public safety. The team will work closely with the jail, the court system and law enforcement to engage, enroll, and provide intensive outpatient services and supports to individuals frequently interacting with law enforcement who require a great deal of support to achieve recovery and stability in the community.

### **Crisis Intervention Team Expansion**

Expands upon services funded by NCHD and provided by MHID Crisis Intervention Teams operated in partnership with Corpus Christi Police Department and the Nueces County Sheriff's Department. Program pairs law enforcement with NCMHID mental health professionals and serves to provide access to mental health treatment for persons at the point of interaction with law enforcement.

### **Walk In Crisis Clinic**

Provides for on demand access to a prescribing psychiatric service provider along with case management, skills training, and psychosocial rehabilitation services to ameliorate non emergent crisis' that would otherwise result in inpatient care or further interaction with law enforcement. The walk-in clinic serves as a diversion point/drop off location for law enforcement and provides rapid access and enrollment in psychiatric medication management and outpatient services.

### **Diversion Center (coming 2025)**

- A single point of drop off for law enforcement.
- Reduces unnecessary arrests and hospitalizations.
- 24-hour monitoring, support and engagement.
- Access to psychiatric medication management and primary healthcare treatment as part of engagement in long term outpatient services and supports.
- Recovery oriented programming, including access to peer support.

- Operated in collaboration with law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office with the support of the Jail and courts.
- Integrated with other community resources and support to create a truly community-based entry point for services.
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation services
- Substance use disorder interventions.
- Peer support
- Comprehensive Case Management and more.