Addressing the Health and Social Needs of Justice-Involved Young Adults

Strategies to Achieve Alignment, Collaboration, and Synergy Across Delivery and Financing Systems

Research-In-Progress Webinar
Wednesday, September 16th, 2020
12:00-1:00 pm ET/9:00-10:00am PT
Agenda

Welcome: Chris Lyttle, JD
Deputy Director for Systems for Action

Georges Naufal, PhD

Presenters: Texas A&M University
Emily Naiser, PhD, MPH
Texas A&M University

Geoff Burkhart
Texas Indigent Defense Commission

Q&A: Chris Lyttle, JD
Georges Naufal, PhD is an Assistant Research Scientist at the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University and a research fellow at the IZA Institute of Labor Economics. George is also a Visiting Scientist at the Center for Outcomes Research at Houston Methodist. Previously he was the Technical Director at Timberlake Consultants. He was also an Assistant/Associate Professor of Economics at The American University of Sharjah (2007 to 2014) in the United Arab Emirates. George earned his PhD in Economics in 2007 from Texas A&M University. His area of expertise is applied econometrics with applications to labor economics including criminal justice, and public health.
Emily Naiser, PhD, MPH has over ten years of research experience as a project director at PPRI. She has collaborated on projects in a range of disciplines, including public health, education and criminal justice. Emily uses both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods to ascertain program effectiveness and develop best practice recommendations to state-level policymakers. She has conducted community needs assessments and evaluations of various programs aiming to improve the health and well-being of women and children with special health care needs and has years of experience conducting research with vulnerable populations.
Addressing the Health and Social Needs of Justice-Involved Young Adults
Refresher – Research Questions

• Does a community-based services program led by team-based decision-makers improve emerging adults physical and mental health and reduce recidivism compared to the current criminal justice system? (RCT)

• What features of the program are driving these outcomes? How has the program changed over time? (Process Evaluation)
• Criminal justice system is failing emerging adults
  – Emerging adults (17 to 24) make up 11% of Texas’ population but account for 29% of arrests

  – Distinct health needs are being ignored
    • Substance abuse
    • Co-occurring disorders
    • Emotional and physical trauma
Context

- Criminal justice system is failing emerging adults
  - Underlying factors leading an individual to engage in criminal behavior are not being addressed → recurring criminal activity and arrests
  - Criminal justice system is overwhelmed
TJ Program

• Arrested emerging adults in treatment group will receive:
  – A needs assessment to determine factors contributing to criminal behavior
  – A case review team (CRT) will review the assessment and propose community-based services to best address these factors
  – The CRT will devise an Individual Care Plan (ICP) for each defendant
  – Each defendant will have a case management team (CMT) that will act as a liaison between the defendant and the CRT
  – Each defendant will be in the program for up to 18 months
  – The CRT will liaise with the county’s criminal justice stakeholders
Study - RCT

• Eligibility
  – Any defendant between 17 and 24 arrested in Williamson County with an eligible offense

• Selection/Enrollment Process
  – Program manager and a defense attorney will inform and consent eligible defendants
  – Assignment occurs through random selection
  – We expect 12 enrollees per month; data collection will last for one year
    • Expect about 144 participants
Outcomes of Interest

• Recidivism
  – Defined as arrest within a specific period
• Health outcomes
  – Collect quarterly surveys using SF-12
• Potential other outcomes
  – Employment
  – Educational attainment
  – Housing
Data Collection

• Criminal justice data from the county
  – Allows us to compute recidivism

• Health data
  – At initial enrollment; $15 gift card for agreeing to participate in study and provide contact information
  – Collect a baseline survey via a web-link and/or phone survey
  – Quarterly surveys for up to 2 year
    • Participants receive a $15 as a thank you for each completed survey
Data Collection

• Administrative data
  – Health care utilization
  – Employment
  – Educational attainment
Study – Process Evaluation

• Essential component of the study – better understand
  – What factors are most associated with the outcomes
  – How the proposed system has changed over time

• Use a thorough approach
  – Document analysis
  – Semi-structured interviews with all involved/affected stakeholders
  – Focus groups
  – Direct observation
Obstacles

• IRB process
  – Full board review
    • Started with shell application
    • Multiple amendments

  – One concern was the role of district attorney in eligibility of offenses
    • Was able to overcome that after a significant delay

  – Another concern is including 17-year olds in the study
Obstacles

• COVID-19 shut down the program and the county removed all non-essential personnel from the jail

• On March 29, 2020, the governor of Texas issued an executive order (No. GA-13) relating to detention and personal bond

• The executive order and changes due to COVID-19 also impacted the list of eligible offenses putting further concerns on sample size
Obstacles

• Restricted access to defendants in the control group who are now inmates at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice
  – Personal visits are not allowed
  – Phone system is overwhelmed with calls from family and relatives
  – Regular mail is allowed (no self addressed mail and no monetary incentives)
Obstacles

• County recently decided to take the program management in-house rather than rely on an external entity
  – Concern that the program fidelity will be impacted
  – Currently working with the county on transition
Progress to Date

• IRB application approved

• IRB training for program staff

• All paperwork and documents have been created
  – Research protocol, consent documents (in English and Spanish)
  – Research process for program staff
• Change the whole process from in-person to virtual intake to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions
  – Acquire necessary approvals from the county and then IRB
  – Adjust protocol and steps to accommodate virtual intake and enrollment
Geoff Burkhart
Texas Indigent Defense Commission
Questions?

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Upcoming Webinars

September 30th | 12pm ET
Using Regional Governing Boards to Align Services for Rural Children of the Opioid Crisis
Alicia Bunger, PhD, The Ohio State University

October 14th | 12pm ET
Connecting Vulnerable Seniors to Nutrition Assistance Through a Managed Care Plan
Ashley Humienny, MBA and Suzanne Kinsky, Benefits Data Trust
Acknowledgements

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