

Pacific Clinics

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ADVANCES

Rethinking the **SYSTEM**

Offering alternatives
for mentally ill parolees

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AB 109 programs address the
mental health needs of parolees

A Message from the President and the Chairman of the Board



Susan Mandel, PhD
President, Pacific Clinics



Zaven Kazazian
Board Chair, Pacific Clinics

Welcome to the Pacific Clinics Spring 2015 Advances.

This issue touches on the work that our organization does with parolees and those in jail. According to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 24 percent of the prison population has been diagnosed with a mental illness. So often this population is not treated for their mental illness and substance abuse issues. Many do not receive treatment the whole time they are incarcerated, so when they are released they come back into the population untreated.

Assembly Bill 109 was adopted in 2011 and helps fund mental health care for parolees. Our programs that work with AB109 consumers focus on many issues including mental health and substance abuse. Many of the consumers who have gone through this program stay with Pacific Clinics after their parole ends to finish treatment.

At our program in Ventura, Peer Partners go to the jail to counsel Transitional Age Youth (ages 16-25). The purpose is to help the offenders set goals, know what services are available when they are released and be a general positive influence to the incarcerated youth. Peer Partners live with mental illness and/or substance abuse. As mentors, they demonstrate to our clients that they too can live with similar challenges.

One of the newest programs that reach teens is New Directions. This pilot program is a collaboration of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, Juvenile Division of the Los Angeles Superior Court, Los Angeles County Districts Attorney's Office and Pacific Clinics, and the brainchild of former Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina. It identifies teens that are in jail and may have mental health issues and allows the probation department to not only work with the teen but friends and family. Through this collaboration we reach those who may otherwise not receive help.

NEW DIRECTIONS PILOT PROGRAM OFFERS TEENS AN ALTERNATIVE TO JAIL



“The primary goal of New Directions is that a teenager’s first arrest is their last” –Program Director, Victoria White, MFT

Until a few months ago, when a young teenager broke the law for the first time, they were assigned a probation officer and immediately booked into the criminal justice system. Now, there is another option.

New Directions, a dynamic pilot program, is a collaboration of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, Juvenile Division of the Los Angeles Superior Court, Los Angeles County Districts Attorney’s Office and Pacific Clinics. It is the brainchild of former Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina who recognized that many young teens were incarcerated without anyone asking what might be the cause of their behavior. Funding for the program has been established without the barriers that normally has prevented inclusion of friends and family members in the services.

First time juvenile offenders, ages 12 to 17 years old, are offered mental health services and judicial immunity

if they choose the six month New Directions diversion program. If they do not, their case is referred to the court for possible prosecution and formal probation.

New Directions provides the teens and their families a full psychosocial assessment to determine risk factors that impact the entire family. From there, a detailed family care plan is developed to guide the teens toward successful program completion.

“Not only do we provide services in the home, community, office or school, but we also provide individual, family or group therapy. To ensure the teen and family are successful following completion of the program, we link the family members to community services that will provide ongoing support,” said Program Director Victoria White, MFT.

Currently, New Directions only serves teens that live in the

First Supervisorial District of Los Angeles. Program outcomes are being compiled with the hopes of replicating the program throughout all five Supervisorial Districts of Los Angeles County. Data collected includes program participants’ school attendance, academic achievement, school behavior, participation in services and completion of the family care plan goals.

Referrals are coming in from as far west as the Westlake District of Los Angeles and as far east as Pomona requiring the collaboration of the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Local school districts in Azusa and Baldwin Park are also participating in the collection of data.

“Every partnership improves the chances of success for each participant,” said White.

OFFERING OPTIONS

Program Allows Mentally Ill Parolees to Get the Help They Need

The clients who visit mental health worker Chris Espe at the AB109 program aren't likely to have found Pacific Clinics on their own. Sent as a requirement of their probation they come to the clinic reluctantly.

"Sometimes the clients come through the door and they project an image - there are a lot of tattoos on faces - and they shock the other clients and some of the therapists feel intimidated," Espe said. "But I would honestly say that I expect they will be able to change, if I see them as people who will."

In spring of 2011 the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109) which provided for the realignment of funding and supervision of low-level offenders, adult parolees and juvenile offenders from state prisons and institutions to the local level.

This would not only save money on the state level, but was also intended to make services available that support rehabilitation and assimilation into the community, in turn cutting recidivism.

In the mental health field this meant more money for evidence-based rehabilitation including drug and alcohol treatment, mental health treatment, anger management, cognitive behavior therapy, and job training and employment.

"It takes clients who are in the jail system and links them with mental health services



as part of probation - something that wasn't happening," said Viola Gaffney, RN, MFT, Divisional Director of West Valley Family and Intensive Services. "These are non-violent, non-predatory, non-sexual offenders who in the past would not have had access."

With the new funding Pacific Clinics established AB109 programs in East Los Angeles and Pasadena. There are currently 221 clients in the programs who come from across Southern California from Wrightwood to Santa Monica.

The goal of this program is to help people released from prison live successfully in the community, achieve their personal recovery goals, and avoid re-incarceration or unnecessary psychiatric hospitalization.

To get to our program, parolees who qualify under the realignment and need mental health treatment are sent to a Department of Mental Health hub where they are evaluated. If referred to Pacific Clinics, our team must see them within five days for a full assessment.

"There are many challenges," said James Wainwright, MFT, Associate Divisional Director at West Valley Adult Intensive Programs. "These folks are often street smart and often say what they think you want to hear."

The stigma against those suffering from mental illness is great in prison. So many of the clients who are assigned to the program are wary of getting treated for mental health problems, afraid they will go back to jail and become targets, according to Wainwright. The most common diagnoses are PTSD, anxiety and depression. Almost all clients in the AB 109 program have substance abuse issues.

If the client doesn't show up for an appointment it is a violation of probation and they could go back to jail. Most are off the AB109 program within a year, but once probation is finished, many continue with their treatment.

Did You **KNOW?**

24%

Of prison population that has been evaluated has been diagnosed with some form of mental illness.

6 out of 10



Nationally, prisoners have substance abuse issues

Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

"Sometimes they come in reluctantly but then start to come in more regularly - keeping appointments - and seeing the benefits of the service," Espe said. "This is a challenging group of people to work with. Many of them think 'I'm going back to jail, so what's the point.' Finding hope is a big challenge."

Thinking Past Jail Time

“If we give them tools to make the stay in jail less chaotic then they do better when they come out.”

Jennifer Gomez, Program Director

When Transitional Age Youth (TAY) are incarcerated at the Ventura County Jail, Todd Road Facility, many are stressed out, have substance abuse issues or are having a mental health crisis. Pacific Clinics has a program that links these offenders with their peers with the goal of identifying problems and then providing resources to help.

In 2011, a committee at the Ventura TAY Wellness and Recovery Center in Oxnard met with a jail subcommittee to discuss intervention with 18 – 25 year-old offenders. (This is the TAY age group.)

Todd Road has 700 inmates with the average number of youth being 207 at any given time. Thirty percent of all inmates have a history of mental health issues, according to the county.

The committees decided that the people most qualified to help these inmates were their peers. So peer partners with lived youth experience began visiting the jail to offer support, develop personal wellness recovery plans, work on goal

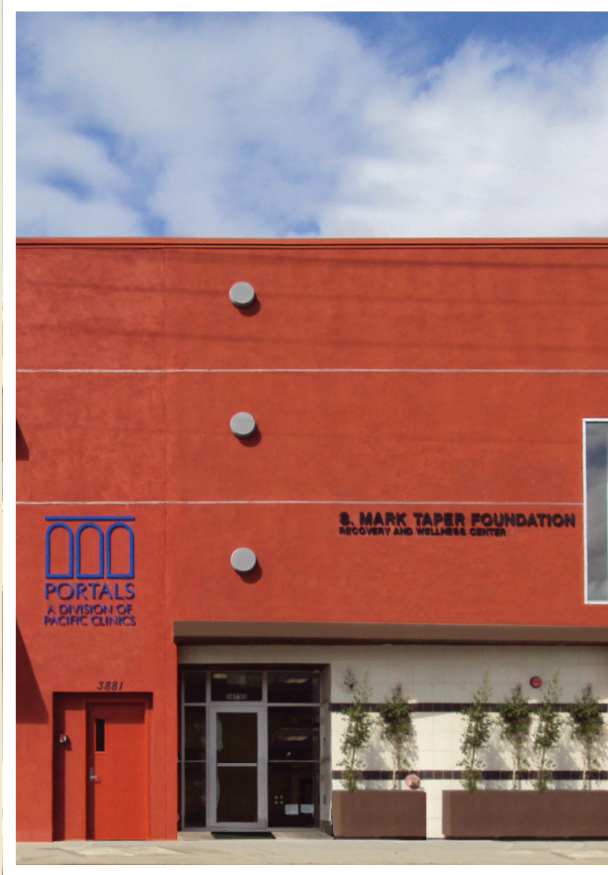
development and provide linkage to mental health services.

“The TAY population has a special set of problems,” said Jennifer Gomez, program director at the TAY Center. “If we give them tools to make the stay in jail less chaotic then they do better when they come out.”

The project is funded through the Mental Health Services Act, Prop 63, and a contract with Ventura County Behavioral Health. The peer partners go through training in developing recovery plans and goal development.

When the inmates are ready to be released, those participating in the program are provided with community resources that can provide basic services.

“The program has been a success and the Sheriff would like to expand,” Gomez said. “I would like to see an expansion. We are the only peer providers that I know of in our state doing this program.”



Pacific Clinics Portals division celebrates its 60th anniversary

Portals, a division of Pacific Clinics is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Established in 1955, Portals is one of the oldest and largest non-profit mental health organizations serving Central and South Los Angeles which has the second largest population of homeless people with mental illness in Los Angeles County.

It is one of the first agencies to address the needs of homeless individuals with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse. Portals offers a comprehensive range of coordinated services that include housing, psychiatric rehabilitation, vocational training, health navigation, and socialization activities for transitional youth (ages 16-25), adults and older adults.



Pacific Clinics names Vonda Ray Jones, Vice President Claims

Vonda Ray was appointed Vice President, Claims Operations for Pacific Clinics, effective Tuesday, February 17, 2015. She will be responsible for the development and processing of client billing and will provide

strategic guidance, direction and management to support the revenue and data management teams.

Ms. Ray has over 20 years of experience in the healthcare field. Her expertise in claims management was gained in key management positions within hospitals, physician groups, urgent care centers, and radiation oncology and diagnostic imaging centers.

She is a member of the American Academy of Professional Coders and the Healthcare Financial Management Association.



Samantha James-Perez named Vice President of State Board

Samantha James-Perez, LPT/LVN, has been elected Vice-President of the California Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians. She was appointed to the board by

Governor Jerry Brown two years ago. The 11-person California Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians meets four times a year.

Ms. James-Perez is coordinator and medication services supervisor at Pacific Clinics Intensive Children's Services in Monrovia.

The California Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians protects the public from unsafe licensees and also protects potential licensees from unapproved, unethical, and/or underperforming LVN and LPT colleges. The Board is also involved in decisions about legislation, standards of practice, licensure eligibility, disciplinary actions against licensees and schools, and overseeing the Board's budget.



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Pacific Clinics

Fiesta Brunch

IT'S FIESTA TIME AGAIN!

Sunday, May 3, 2015 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Brookside Golf Club (at the Rose Bowl)
1133 Rosemont Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91103



Hosted by:
ABC7 Eyewitness News'
Ellen Leyva

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**For more information about Pacific Clinics
or this publication contact the Public Affairs
Department at (626) 254-5024.**

Pacific Clinics, a non-profit agency, has been providing mental health care and substance abuse services to individuals and families since 1926. Today the agency has 81 locations in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura counties, and serves children, adults, older adults and families.