

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICE CENTER  
(The Bureau of Substance Abuse)

A Preliminary Evaluation Report

Submitted by

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Delaware Criminal Justice Planning Commission

December 1978

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ACQUISITIONS

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## SUMMARY

Criminal Justice Service Center  
Bureau of Substance Abuse  
December 1978

### A. Purpose(s):

1. To provide coordination of referrals between criminal justice system agencies and Bureau of Substance Abuse treatment facilities.
2. To conduct evaluations on persons referred to the Center to determine the extent of substance abuse and make recommendations for treatment.
3. To provide prompt feedback to referral sources.

### B. Finding(s):

1. The Criminal Justice Service Center opened June 19, 1978. It is located in the Central YMCA, 11th and Washington Streets, Wilmington. Currently, there are three staff members, all counselors. Two have been with the Center since it opened and one started October 23, 1978.
2. The Center's efforts in developing referral mechanisms has been commendable. In order to insure the Center could provide the services it proposed, and not fall behind due to too much work, referral mechanisms have been developed slowly. To date, referral agreements have been reached with the Bureau of Adult Corrections; the Court of Common Pleas; Superior Court; the Attorney General's Office, and the Public Defender's Office.
3. From June 19, 1978 through October 31, 1978, the Center received 177 referrals. It was difficult to determine how many possible referrals there are.
4. Evaluations have been completed on 123 of the 177 clients referred; an additional 30 had evaluations completed by other BSA personnel; 24 referrals had not appeared.
5. The Center has sent five follow-up letters to referral sources documenting clients who were referred who did not appear. Twelve of the 38 persons on these lists subsequently appeared.

6. In the majority of cases for which the data was available, feedback was provided to referral sources concerning treatment recommendations within eight working days.

7. The Center has no support staff which is detrimental to the program in terms of reduced recordkeeping abilities, less effective use of staff time, and delays in providing feedback to referral sources.

8. Although it is quite early in the program's operation, the Center appears to be providing a needed services. Referral sources, particularly judges, are generally pleased with the program. Considering it frequently takes a new program six months to a year to be implemented, the project is to be commended on its ability to complete implementation and to begin to fully operate within this four month period.

#### C. Recommendations:

1. Some type of support personnel (clerk-typist, receptionist, or administrative assistant) be assigned to the Center, at least for a six month trial period. As the Center expands its services, this will be more important.

2. Assuming recommendation one is implemented, it is recommended that the services of the Center be expanded from simply coordinating referrals to provide monitoring services to BSA and others concerning the various substance abuse treatment programs and the criminal justice system. With support services, it would be relatively easy for the Service Center to provide answers to important questions such as the following:

- A. How many clients appear at recommended treatment programs? How many successfully complete the programs? What happens to those who do not enter treatment? What is the criminal justice system's disposition of those who do or do not complete treatment?
- B. Which programs provide feedback to referral sources? Which programs have the highest success rates?
- C. What type of programs (adult community based, juvenile residential) are most needed?

3. The Center should modify its Master log to include the following items: clients stage in the system; ten-day follow-up date; date referral source feedback provided; reason no treatment recommended (e.g. no treatment needed, client does not want treatment); treatment recommended by Center and treatment recommended by SET. If recommendation two is implemented, additional items will be needed.

4. The Evaluation Unit of the Delaware Criminal Justice Planning Commission should conduct a follow-up to this report in June 1979.

5. The Bureau of Substance Abuse should consider developing written measurable goals and objectives for the Center for the next year.

6. The Center should provide more feedback detailing the client's problem to referral sources rather than just stating a recommended treatment program.

7. The Center should obtain an office in the Public Building.

## I. Introduction

Although the precise impact of substance abuse and the criminal justice system has yet to be defined, almost everyone agrees there is a significant relationship. A study conducted by the Bureau of Substance Abuse indicated at least 65 percent of clients entering treatment had had some involvement with the criminal justice system. Another study conducted in March 1976 revealed that as many as 40 percent, if not more, of the inmates at DCC had a substance abuse problem. In the past, coordination between the Bureau of Substance Abuse and the numerous criminal justice agencies was poor. Referrals for treatment could be made in a number of ways, follow-up was sporadic at best and unknown numbers of clients got "lost between the cracks". In response to this problem, the Bureau of Substance Abuse opened the Criminal Justice Service Center in June 1978. The purpose of the center is to provide a single unit to which agents within the criminal justice system could refer a client suspected of having a substance abuse problem. Also, the unit would be a single source for providing technical assistance to criminal justice system agencies.

Briefly, the underlying philosophy of the Center is as follows: By providing staff and office space (inputs), the BSA will be able to coordinate referrals between the criminal justice system and substance abuse treatment facilities (activities). This coordination will lead to substance abusers receiving necessary treatment (results), which will lead to their reduced involvement in the

criminal justice system (outcomes). The Delaware Criminal Justice Planning Commission agreed to monitor and evaluate the BSA's efforts in this endeavor.

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to BSA decision-makers and others within the criminal justice system concerning the performance of the Center during its first four months of operation. Primarily the report will examine the relationships between the inputs (staff) and activities (coordination of referrals). The key events which will be discussed are the development of referral mechanisms and the actual delivery of services. The report is based on a review of center records, and interviews with center personnel and referral sources.

## II. Center Inputs

The CJSC is located in the Central YMCA, 11th & Washington Streets, Wilmington. It is currently designed to serve New Castle County. As of this writing, there are three staff members, all counselors. Two have been with the Center since it opened in June and one was hired October 23, 1978. It is anticipated an additional counselor will be hired in the near future. There is no support staff or copying capability at the Center and staff must rely on BSA personnel at the State Hospital or their own typing ability in order to provide necessary correspondence.

Basically, the Center receives a verbal or written referral (verbal referrals are followed by written referrals) from an agent within the criminal justice system such as a judge or probation

officer. The referral is logged in on a master log maintained at the center. When the referral arrives at the center, an evaluation is completed in which the client's substance abuse problem is assessed and a recommendation for treatment is made. The evaluation and recommendation are sent to the Substance Evaluation Team (SET) which meets every Thursday. The SET makes the final recommendation and the referral source is notified within 15 days concerning the recommendation. It is the responsibility of the referral source to see that the recommendation is implemented. If a client does not show-up at the center within 15 days after referral, the referral source is so notified. Again, it is the responsibility of the referral source to see that the client goes to the Center.

### III. Center Activities

The primary activity of the center is to coordinate referrals from the criminal justice system. In order to do this, two key events must occur. First, the Center must receive referrals, and second, the Center must provide the services it proposes in order to develop and maintain credibility (which leads to increased referrals). Each of these will be discussed.

#### A. Development of Referral Mechanisms

There are at least 20 criminal justice agencies serving clients in New Castle County. To attempt to coordinate referrals from all these agencies is a large undertaking. Rather than approach the problem all at once, the Bureau choose to begin small

and gradually expand its services. To date, formal referral agreements have been developed between the Center and the following agencies: Bureau of Adult Corrections, Probation and Parole, pre-sentence, pre-trial release and the various institutions; Attorney General's Office; Public Defender's Office; Court of Common Pleas, and Superior Court Pre-Sentence Office. It is anticipated agreements will be reached with the Bureau of Juvenile Corrections and magistrates in the near future.

The Bureau's approach to developing these referral agreements has been exemplary. In May 1978, a memorandum "to all concerned" was sent from the Director of the Bureau, Bill Merrill, briefly describing the Center and its purposes. Then meetings were arranged with various agencies and a detailed presentation given. After a referral procedure was agreed to, a memorandum confirming the agreement was sent. The Bureau should be commended for its pro-active efforts in this endeavor. DCJPC has experienced projects failing because this important ground work was not done.

In the four and one-half months from June 19 through October 31, the Center has received 177 referrals. Table I (page 5) indicates the source of those referrals.

It is extremely difficult to determine how many possible referrals there are. During the four months from June through September, 159 persons were arrested in New Castle County for drug charges alone. However, this may represent only a small portion of persons who enter the criminal justice system who may

have a substance abuse problem. Of the clients evaluated by the Center for which the data was available, over 50 percent had been arrested for non-drug offenses.

TABLE I

Source of Referrals to CJSC  
June 19, 1978 to October 31, 1978

<u>Agency</u>	
BAC - Probation & Parole	68
Pre-Sentence (Superior Court)	40
Superior Court	19
Court of Common Pleas	17
Public Defender	10
Private Attorney	6
Municipal Court	4
Family Court	3
Bureau of Juvenile Corrections	3
DCC	2
Magistrates Courts	2
Federal Court	1
Out-of-state court	1
Attorney General	1

## B. Delivery of Service

The primary services which the Center proposed to provide were 1) the prompt completion of substance abuse evaluations and prompt feedback to referral sources concerning 1) whether or not client appeared and 2) treatment recommended. In relation to these objectives, the Center has accomplished the following:

1. Evaluations have been completed on 123 of the 177 clients referred; an additional 30 persons were incarcerated at the time of referral and evaluations were performed by other BSA personnel. The remaining 24 persons have not appeared at the Center for evaluation.

2. Five letters have been sent to referral sources informing them that referrals have not appeared for evaluation. A total of 38 persons have been listed on these letters (generally one letter is typed with all names on it and a copy sent to all appropriate referral sources). Of these 38 persons, 12 appeared at the Center following the issuance of the letter.

The Center has not quite met its objective in this area. It originally was proposed that follow-up letters would be sent at least every 15 days. Based on a start-up date of 6-15-78, at least nine letters should have been sent by October 30, 1978, and only five have been. Part of this has been attributable to normal start-up delays, and part to administrative concerns which will be discussed below.

3. The Center has done well in regard to providing prompt feedback to referral sources concerning treatment recommendations.

Table II shows the number of working days between the client was seen and when a follow-up letter was sent.

TABLE II	
Working Days Elapsed Between Date Client Seen and Follow-up Letter	
<u>Number of Days</u>	<u>Number of Clients</u>
3	5
4	9
5	4
6	15
7	10
8	10
9	6
10	5
11	2
12	1
13	3
14	1
15	2
NA	50
(Not Available indicates either date evaluated or date follow-up letter sent was not available)	

As this table indicates, in the majority of cases for which the data was available, feedback to referral sources was provided within eight working days. Considering BSA's reputation in the past for poor feedback, this is quite good.

### 3. Subjective Measures

Although the Center has not been open long enough for many referral sources to develop opinions of its services based on

considerable contact with the program, first impressions are important. Hence, numerous persons who had made referrals to the Center were interviewed. A few sources indicated they were not satisfied with the Center. However, the majority of persons indicated they were pleased. Positive comments included the following:

They always have some one in the court which facilitates referrals and reduces the number of clients who "get lost" between referral and evaluation.

They get reports back quickly.

They make concrete recommendations, i.e., rather than recommend a residential treatment program they name the program.

It is a very good concept

Negative comments included the following:

They need more qualified people.

They don't provide enough feedback.

Hadn't had trouble with system before, feels this just adds more people to go through and is less efficient.

#### IV. Concerns

Although the center appears to be providing the services proposed and referral sources are generally pleased, there are two related areas of concern: staffing patterns and record keeping. As indicated above, the Center has no support staff available in its offices. This results in the following problems:

1. A counselor must be in the office at all times to assure the telephone is answered. Often there may be a more appropriate place for counselors to be, e.g. in court, rather than at the office. Also, answering telephones can be rather distracting

when trying to conduct an evaluation.

2. Follow-up letters need to be sent to Delaware State Hospital to be typed. This leads to delays. If there were support staff at the Center, follow-up letters could be more prompt, and perhaps provide more information. Also, under the present system, the Center must rely on other BSA personnel to provide copies of correspondence for its files, resulting in many incomplete files.

3. Although the records proposed to be maintained are relatively comprehensive, many items such as date follow-up letter sent were not available. Hopefully, with the addition of support staff, this problem could be resolved.

#### V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, the following recommendations are made:

1. Some type of support personnel (clerk-typist, receptionist, or administrative assistant) be assigned to the Center, at least for a six month trial period. As the Center expands its services, this will be more important.

2. Assuming recommendation 1 is implemented, it is recommended that the services of the Center be expanded from simply coordinating referrals to providing monitoring services to BSA and others concerning the various substance abuse treatment programs and the criminal justice system. With support services, it would be relatively easy for the Service Center to provide answers to important questions such as the following:

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*Handwritten:* ~~File~~ *Ben*  
*File - of the*  
*EVAL*

MEMO

To: Tom Quinn  
From: Pat Robinson *PR*  
Re: Criminal Justice Service Center  
Date: February 26, 1979

*Handwritten:* *THS* *as I include* *in the Eval.* *follow up?*

One of the recommendations contained in the preliminary evaluation report of the Bureau of Substance Abuse's Criminal Justice Service Center was that the Department of Health and Social Services obtain a secretary or similar position for the center. I spoke with Jack Lemley today, and he said they are currently interviewing for the position.

Other recommendations in the report were more or less suggestions for changes in the Center's operation. Currently the center is undergoing some organizational changes which may directly affect the recommendations I made (briefly, the Center may take over many of the duties of the substance Evaluation Team) so, I'll wait till things are more settled to do follow up on those items.

**END**