

# Summary Debriefing

December 7, 2009



## Access to Services:

- **There appears to be no waiting lists for clients** to receive Alcohol Severity Index (ASI) assessments and Individual Out Patient (IOP) treatment. There are both group sessions and individual therapy available through the local mental health (MH) center.
- **SCRAM<sup>1</sup> ankle bracelets are available and required for all adults with alcohol related offenses.** This equipment is available to Lincoln County Adult Probation Program (hereafter referred to as court supervised treatment program) due in part to the close collaboration with the Sherriff's Department. This is especially helpful in this specific area because the probation officer fulfills the role of the case worker as well; this type of monitoring system assists with monitoring the participants. Use of the SCRAM device also holds participants to a higher level of accountability.
- *There is a need for affordable housing, or transitional housing in particular for the treatment side of the program.* It was felt that when the participant lives with family who also uses, getting out of the substance abuse atmosphere is very important, but with the lack of affordable housing this is difficult.
- *The court supervised treatment program within itself is not staffed to work with individuals who suffer from a severe mental health diagnosis* and require psychiatric medications so this population is not typically served through this program. There are services for this population, however in this community through the mental health center.
- *Transportation has been identified as an ongoing issue.* There is a sense that participants have been able to join together and carpool to make sure they are where they need to be for appointments and court. Most of the participants do live many miles outside of Afton/Kemmerer, so riding bikes or walking is not an option for most participants.



## Quality of Services including support for recovery:

- **The court supervised treatment program utilizes High Country counseling for therapy services and ASI evaluation services.** This seems to be a very workable and productive collaboration. There is great rapport with the clients and their counselors, and they have access to different counselors in the center which provides a variety of services. High Country Counseling has offices in both Afton and Kemmerer, so both court supervised treatment program clients have access to therapy services.

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<sup>1</sup> More information about SCRAM can be found at: <http://www.alcoholmonitoring.com/>.

- **There appears to be quality communication between therapy and probation.** This has been a consistency for several years and this has directly impacted for the progress of court supervised treatment program clients. This consistency has also facilitated the re-opening of the court supervised treatment program office in Kemmerer.
- **Family counseling is offered and encouraged** for participants who have been identified by court supervised treatment program staff or requested by the participants themselves.
- **Aftercare exists for clients who choose to use these services;** they have access to a year of free services at the local mental health center. Although this is a service that could be considered very helpful, it is not a service that is frequently used by court supervised treatment program graduates.
- *There could be better tracking on recidivism rates.* There is a great opportunity to accomplish this with the new system in incarceration booking.



## Collaboration:

- **The court supervised treatment program clearly collaborates with, and is housed in the Sheriff's department.** This is a very significant benefit for the program because the Sheriff's office provides accountability, assistance for male urinary analysis (UA's), and helps with home visits, as well as access to the SCRAM devices.
- **During the last review, this court supervised treatment program only had an office in Afton, WY which left the Southern half of the County void of treatment court services.** Now, Kemmerer also has court supervised treatment program that serves individuals in the lower half of the county, increasing the overall capacity for Lincoln County.
- Western Wyoming Community Outreach works with the court supervised treatment program clients to achieve GED's. Acquiring a GED, if a participant does not have one or a high school diploma, is a requirement for graduating the program. This also enables better outcomes for participants.
- Quality of life funds are accessible and used. These funds are offered through the community mental health center and have been accessed several times by court supervised treatment program participants.
- The judge is very involved with the court supervised treatment program and will make time to visit about treatment court issues. The judge doesn't just say "no" to requests, however he will engage the team and express his thoughts.

# Lincoln County Adult Probation Program

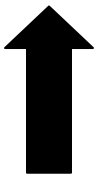
## Afton and Kemmerer, Wyoming

### November 2009



#### **Overarching Principals as reported from review participants and others:**

- Lincoln County Adult Probation Program (hereafter referred to as court supervised treatment program) embraces a multi-collaboration approach among the program participants and the local service providers. Both court supervised treatment program offices work seamlessly with the Sherriff's Department and the local mental health center.
- There is a noteworthy relationship between High Country Counseling and the court supervised treatment program. High County Counseling does experience wait lists in the general community; however they ensure that all program clients receive an ASI assessment and treatment services immediately. Both Afton and Kemmerer treatment centers do not appear to harbor concerns with providing the necessary information asked by the court supervised treatment program staff. The Kemmerer office, however, does refuse to administer urinary analysis testing. This has not presented any issues, to date.
- Court supervised treatment program staff, including the judge, were described by the participants as coordinated and kind. The overall tone of the response from interviewed participants is that the program staff are "very supportive, and not trying to just get the clients in trouble, or just waiting to bust them."
- The Afton and Kemmerer court supervised treatment program offices have different probation officers, sheriff office staff, treatment offices and attorneys, but do share the same judge. Given the distance between the two locations, this appears to be the only arrangement that is workable. The coordinator from Afton speaks daily with the Kemmerer probation officer. This daily communication has proven to be an asset in keeping the Kemmerer office running smoothly.



#### **Strength Findings:**

- The judge no longer participates in the staffing that take place before treatment court; however any recommendations that are presented have reached agreement by the defense attorney and the prosecuting attorney as well as the rest of the team.

- Sanctions for not adhering to treatment court requirements are swift because the court supervised treatment program meets frequently. This increases accountability and has a direct impact on the decisions participants make; particularly compared to regular probation.
- Because of the positive interaction between the judge, attorneys and treatment court staff, participants report having a changed perspective towards court and now find it helpful and supportive. The same also applies for a change in perspective towards law enforcement in general.
- Both the court supervised treatment program staff and clients agree that if a client does not necessarily “change” or does re-offend, the program still has an enormous benefit for the participants who were involved for a significant amount of time. Some of these benefits include:
  - Obtaining a GED;
  - establishing relationships with supportive organizations in the community;
  - a changed perspective towards the judicial system in general;
  - personal and family relationship tools;
  - employment, and
  - opened doors for recovery services in the future.
- Although it is the sense that the court supervised treatment program is not known in the community, there has been some positive local newspaper articles on the program.
- Many of the participants return to the home of their parents during the court supervised treatment program because of the lack of housing. For these participants, the probation regularly asks the parents during home visits how the client is doing and gathers feedback from the parents about the clients.
- Several court supervised treatment program participants have accessed the Quality of Life funds. These are funds provided by the state that allows individuals to obtain and utilize key needs through the counseling center. This could include:
  - Housing;
  - utility bill payment assistance;
  - medications;
  - clothing, and
  - other temporary funding sources.
- Court supervised treatment program staff and the local mental health center are able to share information without any "turf" issues. The participants sign releases, and according to the service provider, the court supervised treatment program coordinator and staff understand the limits and do not ask treatment to share

personal information; the coordinator does feel that she gets the information she needs to effectively manage the program.



### **Opportunities for Improvement:**

- It was felt by several people interviewed that there are more people in the community who could benefit from the court supervised treatment program; there has never been a case of a person being rejected by the program because capacity has been reached.
- Additional spouse and couple therapy would be helpful for the treatment side of the program. This can be difficult, because this would require getting the participants' partners to attend counseling.
- The aftercare component of the court supervised treatment program is fairly weak.<sup>2</sup> Clients remain on unsupervised probation for a year after graduating the court supervised treatment program. There has been some consideration of making monthly treatment part of the unsupervised probation terms which might make contact with these participants regular and strengthen the chances of sobriety the following year after a participant graduates.
- There currently is not a tracking system identified for participants who have reoffended. During the review process, this issue was discussed and a possible method to track drug court clients with law enforcement intakes was discussed. Implementing this idea would be helpful for both communities.
- High County treatment center does not offer the sliding fee scale for court supervised treatment program participants ASI assessments so there is a significant out-of-pocket expense for the participant. This is a hardship especially because most of the clients are coming out of jail and therefore have lost employment and/or housing.
- Participants report that a new policy has been developed with the mental health center that prevents participants from attending groups if they are not paid-up for past services.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a general finding in most treatment court reviews in Wyoming.