



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: April 6, 2011 REPORT NO. 11-051
ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of April 13, 2011
SUBJECT: San Diego Police Department Homeless Outreach Team

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

The San Diego Police Department presents an annual report to the Committee on the Homeless Outreach Team.

Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)

In 1999, the San Diego Police Department Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) originated as a problem solving effort to assist patrol officers with community disorder created by chronic homelessness.

The HOT is funded by the County of San Diego and the Police Department.

- \$78,000 dollars from the Police Department-One unlicensed PERT Clinician
- \$107,000 from the County of San Diego-One licensed PERT Clinician.

The County also provides the "in kind" services of two Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) Specialists to work every day with the HOT.

Additional funding is available through the San Diego Police Foundation.

Serial Inebriate Program (SIP)

In 1999, the City of San Diego Emergency Medical Director Dr. Jim Dunford published a report documenting 15 of San Diego's chronic alcoholics costing the City and County about 1.5 million dollars in unreimbursed medical care.

In 2000, in response to Dr. Dunford's report, the San Diego Police Department and the San Diego Superior Courts initiated a pilot program called the Serial Inebriate Program (SIP). It was designed to assist the Police Department with criminal prosecution of chronic inebriates.

In 2001, the County and City of San Diego were satisfied with initial SIP outcomes. The County of San Diego provided Tobacco Settlement funds to operate the program for 3 years. Mental Health Systems Inc. became the program's funded treatment provider.

In 2002, St. Vincent de Paul Village Health Center received private funding and became the SIP medical case manager.

In 2003, the United States Interagency on Homelessness and HUD selected 10 programs in the United States as "best practices" for successfully diverting chronic homeless individuals off the street and into available housing or treatment programs. SIP and HOT were 2 of the 10.

In 2004, SIP received combined annual funding of \$200,000 from the City and County of San Diego. The City Housing Commission provided \$80,000 for sober living housing and the County provided \$120,000 for treatment.

In 2008, the County of San Diego Alcohol and Drug Services increased SIP treatment funding to \$148,500 dollars. The Housing Commission continued funding of \$80,000 for SIP housing.

In FY 10/11, the County of San Diego Alcohol and Drug Services renewed their contract with Mental Health Systems to operate the SIP through FY 14/15 at the same rate of \$156,500. The San Diego Housing Commission continued funding of the SIP housing component with \$68,000.

DISCUSSION

The San Diego region homeless are categorized into two subgroups called chronic homelessness and situational homelessness. The Regional Task Force for the Homeless estimates about 25% of the regions homeless are considered chronically homeless. The vast majority of the chronically homeless live in the City of San Diego's Downtown, Hillcrest, Midway/Rosecrans, North Park, Beach Areas, and La Jolla.

The Homeless Outreach Team works primarily with individuals suffering from chronic homelessness. It is a multi-disciplinary team with partnerships between law enforcement, City of San Diego Emergency Medical Services, the Superior Courts, County Alcohol and Drug Services, County Mental Health Services, County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), local homeless service providers, area hospitals, and numerous community agencies.

The Team consists of four San Diego Police Officers, two Psychiatric Emergency Response Team Clinicians (PERT), and two County of San Diego Health and Human Service Specialists. The HOT is funded by the Police Department (\$78,000), and County of San Diego Mental Health Services Act money (\$107,000). Private donations from the San Diego Police Foundation assist the team with emergency housing vouchers.

In addition to their one funded PERT Clinician, the County of San Diego supports the team with "in-kind" services of two full time HHSA Specialists. The HHSA and PERT partnership

provides the team with the ability to make facilitated placements into many county funded mental health and substance abuse treatment programs.

One San Diego Police Department Sergeant supervises the team's day-to-day activity. The Homeless Outreach Team is comprised of three components. These components are outreach teams, the Serial Inebriate Program, and an enforcement element.

OUTREACH TEAMS

There are two outreach teams on the streets Monday-Friday from 5:30AM to 3:30PM. A team consists of one police officer, one PERT clinician, and one HHSA Specialist. These teams do limited enforcement as their primary function is to develop relationships with the homeless and provide voluntary outreach to the chronic homeless population. They take referrals from police officers, community members, City Council, and the Superior Courts. Staffing permitted there is at least one Outreach Team at the City Concourse Public Bathrooms Monday-Friday from 6:30AM-8AM.

For calendar year 2010 these two teams contacted about 930 people. They made about 390 placements in county funded treatment programs, area hospitals, and local homeless shelters. Almost all contacts were in the downtown area.

SERIAL INEBRIATE PROGRAM

The Serial Inebriate Program is a post sentencing program using alternative sentencing for the criminal charge of drunk in public in an effort to divert individuals into county funded treatment. The concept is similar to the Drug Court Model. This program is funded to operate only in the City of San Diego.

The goals of the Serial Inebriate Program are to stop or slow the "revolving door" of chronic inebriates going in and out of jail, the sobering center, and area hospitals because of alcohol intoxication. The program provides county funded treatment with housing in lieu of any court imposed custody time.

The Sobering Center, operated by the Volunteers of America, identifies all program participants. Individuals transported to the Sobering Center by the San Diego Police Department five or more times in a thirty day period will be rejected from the facility as a chronic offender. The arresting police officer will then book the individual into County Jail under arrest for drunk in public.

Once in jail the City Attorney's Neighborhood Prosecution Unit prosecutes the case. If convicted the individual will be offered treatment in lieu of any court ordered custody time.

One San Diego Police Officer manages the program's day-to-day operations. This officer makes sure all arrest documentation is complete and liaisons with the Superior Courts. The officer also provides transportation of the suspect from jail to treatment providers, coordinates all program training, and maintains the Department's SIP arrest statistics. Treatment statistics are maintained by the program's county funded treatment provider, (Mental Health Systems Inc.).

SIP funding is a collaborative effort between the City and County of San Diego.

The City of San Diego Housing Commission funds:

- \$68,000 per year
- Sober living housing

The County of San Diego Alcohol and Drug Services and State Drug Medi-Cal funds:

- \$156,500 per year
- Treatment

For calendar year 2010, SIP reports 282 chronic alcoholics accounted for 658 drunk in public arrests. Mental Health Systems Inc. made 156 assessments and 76 people were diverted into treatment.

Mental Health Systems Inc. is County/City funded treatment provider. They are responsible for:

- Case management
- Jail assessments
- Sober Living Beds
- Treatment

St. Vincent de Paul Medical Center provides the SIP with medical case management. All clients choosing the SIP in lieu of custody are transported to the medical center for complete physicals prior to entering Mental Health Systems treatment component. St. Vincent de Paul also provides a medical home for all SIP participants whether or not they remain in treatment.

ENFORCEMENT ELEMENT

The HOT often received calls from city departments asking for help with homeless issues. Because of this the team has assigned one police officer to liaison with the all police divisions, Parks and Recreation, Open Space, Cal Trans, and the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit Code Enforcement Section.

ILLEGAL LODGING

In 2006 a law suit was filed in Federal Court

- 6 defendants alleged
- Unconstitutional to arrest for illegal lodging
- No beds available

In February 2007 there was a case settlement

- Settlement does not apply to private property
- Public property only
- Generally no enforcement between hours 9PM-5:30AM
- Department needs complaint to enforce law
- Prior to any arrest suspect must receive warning
- Suspect must be given a chance to relocate

In February 2011, there was a modification to the settlement

- Specific to the downtown area
- Police permitted to cite or arrest
- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Bed must be available and suspect refuses

As a result of this settlement illegal lodging arrests have dropped from about 2000 arrests in calendar year 2006, to about 680 in 2007, to 540 for 2008, to 570 for 2009 and 310 for 2010. The majority of all illegal lodging arrests are in the Central Division area.

All illegal lodging arrests are processed by the San Diego City Attorney Neighborhood Prosecution Unit. (NPU)

- NPU makes sure cases adhere to 2007 court settlement and 2011 modification.
- If suspect is convicted the HOT is notified to schedule an in custody interview.
- Suspect is assessed by HOT for facilitated placement.
- Suspect may be released from jail to HOT personnel for such placement.

THE WATERMAN CHECK IN CENTER

In February 2011, the Isaiah Project began a one year pilot project for the storage of personal property belonging to homeless individuals living in the downtown area. This storage facility/check in center is modeled after a successful program in the Los Angeles Skid Row community.

- Facility is located downtown at 917 9th Ave.
- Hours of Operation
 - Monday through Friday 7AM-11AM and 4:30PM-7:30PM
 - Saturday 8AM-12 Noon
- Facility has capacity to securely store the personal property of 250 individuals
- Property is maintained in individually numbered 96 gallon plastic bins with top
- Clients must check in at least once every 6 days to maintain ownership of bin
- Should a client not check in the bin will be emptied and stored at the center for 60 days
- The empty bin will given to next waiting client
- It is now at capacity
- In March 2011, the Police Department's Central Division sponsored a stakeholders meeting to discuss community complaints regarding the center.
- There have been no serious complaints to date

CONCLUSION

The Homeless Outreach Team has been recognized throughout the United States as an excellent program. The partnerships created between the County, City, and community has enabled police officers on the street to effectively work with the underserved chronic homeless population.

Respectfully submitted,


William M. Lansdowne
Chief of Police