
Interim Charge:

"For individuals in county jails and TDCJ facilities, or on community supervision or parole, examine:

- The availability of behavioral health services; and*
- The current treatment and recovery options available for those who are experiencing withdrawal from drug or alcohol use.*

Make recommendations for best practices to address the needs of individuals requiring treatment."

June 14, 2022

Dear Chairman Murr and Esteemed Committee Members:

On behalf of the Texas Probation Association (TPA), we are Andrea Bode, Director of the Kerr, Bandera and Gillespie County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD), Jarvis Anderson, Director of Bexar County CSCD and Yoon Kim, Director of Collin County CSCD. We also serve jointly as co-chairs for the TPA legislative committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to address the committee via this written submission.

We are here to address the above-referenced interim charge, specifically regarding individuals on community supervision. Due to the complexity of our departmental budgets, CSCD Directors are tasked with maintaining financial stability regardless of our population needs while preserving core functions. Programming funded through the A.1.1 Strategy: Basic Supervision & A.1.3 Strategy: Community Corrections is deteriorating. We have seen significant changes within the population placed on probation: they are both riskier and have higher needs in both the mental health and substance abuse treatment realms. This issue will continue to compound without legislative intervention to infuse funds into the A.1.1 Strategy: Basic Supervision in the next legislative session. If financially left to continue with current funding levels, the impact will create significant increases in our county jail and prison commitments, placing major pressure on the currently understaffed and vulnerable systems in place, resulting in further decline of public safety.

The diminishing funding for CSCDs has been significant. The antiquated method(s) of finance for the CSCD is becoming increasingly problematic and is a contributing factor for negative outcomes for the population the CSCD is charged with serving. With appropriations in the A.1.1 Strategy: Basic Supervision continuing to decline due to the methodology employed by the archaic formula, CSCDs have little choice but to eliminate or plan for the elimination of specialized programs and services to address issues such as substance use, mental health, and sex offender supervision; and begin to only apply appropriations to core services because core services must be supported.

We want to acknowledge and express our appreciation for grant funding which provides specialized caseloads and treatment for behavioral health services. The CSCDs who receive the funding take full advantage of the funding the Texas Legislature has made available, as demonstrated by the statistics shared by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. However, our system challenges and population needs require additional legislative help and funding. Current resource and funding levels do not meet our risk or need levels or enable us to maintain sustainable public safety and offender rehabilitation models.

Many departments do not have the resources to fully fund inpatient treatment, substance abuse treatment, and dual-diagnosis treatment therapies if grant funds and county funds are insufficient. Additionally, many departments struggle funding substance abuse treatment for offenders transferred out to other jurisdictions, if the supervising jurisdiction also does not have the funds for treatment, especially in our rural areas.

We support future efforts to reform our funding structure and would like to contribute in the discussion of developing best practices in treatment services moving forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jarvis Anderson
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