**What is C-SCHARP?**

The Colorado Second Chance Housing and Re-Entry Program (C-SCHARP) is a comprehensive approach to prisoner reentry that increases the chances of recovery for identified people on parole with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders by providing evidence-based practices both inside and outside of prison. Participants selected for the program and released on parole are ideally transitioned immediately into supportive housing unit (a “housing first” model). C-SCHARP uses an Assertive Community Treatment model to provide behavioral health and wraparound support to the parolee during transition. The C-SCHARP Program is a collaboration between the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC), Division of Housing (DOH) and three community mental health centers: Aurora Mental Health Center (AUMHC), AllHealth Network (AllHealth) – formerly Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health Network, and Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD). Each center provides participants mental health services, substance abuse services, housing assistance, and independent living resources in order to assist them with reintegration back into society.

**Assessment of Program Workflow**

The evaluators conducted site visits with the three community mental health centers and the DOC project coordinator in order to better understand the current process for screening, referral, and service delivery in an effort to identify areas for improvement. Specifically, the evaluators focused on two key transitions in the C-SCHARP workflow, highlighted in yellow below.
Screening Process for Appropriate Program Participants
Findings: The screening process seems to be very thorough and efficient. The process involves multiple screenings to determine participant appropriateness, one by DOC and one by each CMHC. Each CMHC also gets the final say on approval. Staff on both sides mentioned times when there was pressure to push through an individual participant, but overall they feel supported in approving or denying participants. As mentioned above, there is a general feeling that referrals have improved over time and recent participants have been a good fit for program.

Transition from DOC to CMHC
Findings: In terms of the transition process, no obvious gaps were identified for why participants are not making it to each CMHC. The transition process appears to be well planned and happens quickly (within three days). There was slight confusion with the referral process at times with participants showing up unexpectedly at the sites and having to be redirected through the appropriate enrollment process. But in general participants that have discharged unsuccessfully have been due to quick relapses and arrests, not as a result of any missing processes. DOC, Parole Officers and CMHC’s have open communication and do what they can to ensure participants have highest likelihood for success.

Recommendations
The following recommendations are important things to consider if the C-SCHARP program is to continue with a third cohort.

1. **Standardize and document the screening process.**
   The DOC coordinator and the program staff at the CMHCs expressed the importance of finding appropriate participants for the program. While it is important to admit individuals into the program that are likely to benefit from the services provided in the program, if the screening process is not standardized and documented appropriately, it is difficult to demonstrate that the program’s success is attributable to the services provided or whether it is an artifact of only admitting participants to the program who would have been successful regardless of participation in the program.

2. **Provide training on working with a criminal justice population.**
   The CMHC’s expressed a desire for additional training around how to effectively serve individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Being involved in the criminal justice system presents complexities beyond the traditional provision of mental health services. Therefore, training and technical assistance for program staff is recommended in order to improve the effectiveness of the CMHC’s providing services as part of the C-SCHARP program.

3. **Improve coordination for smoother transition from DOC to mental health services.**
   The transition from being incarcerated to release from custody presents many challenges for individuals who have served time. A well-coordinated process that involves communication between the DOC and the CMHC program staff will impact whether the program participant ever receives services from the CMHC. A seamless process will result in improved program success in terms of individuals receiving mental health services and decreased recidivism.

For more information about the evaluation of the C-SCHARP Program, contact the Mental Health Center of Denver’s Program Evaluation Manager: J. Taylor Moore, PhD (taylor.moore@mhcd.org)