

John Eachon Re-Entry Program Focuses on Intensive Therapeutic Services

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The John Eachon Re-Entry Program serves offenders who are eligible for community placement or parole. JERP offers intensive residential and nonresidential treatment for offenders with serious mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders. JERP is a collaboration between four major entities: the Colorado Department of Corrections, Jefferson Center for Mental Health (serving Jefferson, Gilpin, and Clear Creek Counties), Intervention Community Correction Services, and Jefferson County Justice Services Division of Criminal Justice Department of Public Safety. Early planning and collaboration began in September 2003, and with a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, doors opened in November 2005. On July 1, 2005, JERP began receiving state funding.

The goals and objectives of JERP are to:

- » Integrate correctional supervision with community re-entry, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, vocational rehabilitation (education and employment), and social services (housing, benefits, family resources).
- » Increase mental health functioning and prosocial behavior.
- » Decrease psychiatric hospitalizations (or returns to DOC resulting from psychiatric emergencies or decompensation).
- » Increase medication compliance.
- » Reduce technical violations and new criminal offenses.
- » Reduce community corrections placement failures.

Our mission is to offer intensive therapeutic services (individual and group therapy, psychiatric care, medication monitoring) to meet program goals for offenders with co-occurring disorders. Typical diagnoses treated include major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, substance abuse disorders, personality disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Much-needed mental health treatment helps to reduce recidivism.

While in the JERP program, the clients are able to take part in many Jefferson Center services and programs, including additional group therapy; a wellness program; assistance with transition to other housing; benefits application assistance; peer mentoring and counseling; and case management to assist in obtaining employment, education, transportation, and other services.

A JERP participant remains in the residential program at ICCS until he or she is deemed ready for nonresidential placement – transition to Jefferson Center housing or other community living. To ensure community readiness, the decision to transition from community corrections to the community is made by an interdisciplinary team of JERP clinicians, nurse, and supervisor, as well as the ICCS clinical director and staff and the offender's parole officer. Jefferson Center offers a continuum of housing options to serve as transitional living opportunities for clients who are working to eventually obtain independent living within the community.

After completing services at JERP's inpatient site, clients are offered housing through other Jefferson Center programs or within the community. Clients continue attending weekly individual and group therapy, as well as other therapeutic services. Also, offenders may be able to move from the residential program site at ICCS to other approved living arrangements, such as with family or independent living, with the approval of their parole officer and the JERP team.

Jefferson Center offers mental health treatment services that range from intensive residential services through general outpatient therapy or medication management, and JERP clients are encouraged to maintain services with Jefferson Center even after completion of the JERP program, parole, or both.

Preliminary statistics indicate a significant decrease in JERP clients' recidivism rate (2–3 times less) compared with that of severe and persistently mentally ill substance-abusing offenders who receive no treatment.

CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS

The JERP program has identified specific criminogenic factors of severe and persistently mentally ill substance-abusing offenders – focusing on these factors supports recovery and lowers recidivism.

Criminogenic factors include

- Mental health
- Criminal thinking
- Antisocial companions
- Antisocial personality or temperament
- Substance abuse
- Family and marital conflict (social supports)
- Employment (social supports)
- School (social supports)
- Leisure and recreation (social supports)