



Department of Mental Health Forensic Mental Health Services at a Glance

DMH Forensic Mental Health Services (Forensic Services) is involved at the intersection between mental health and the various intercept points in the justice system.

Crisis Intervention Team Development and Police-Based Jail Diversion Programs: Forensic Services provides supports to law enforcement and administers grants to police departments to develop pre-arrest jail diversion programs (JDP's) including Crisis Intervention Teams and clinician/police co-responder programs. As of January 2014, twenty-four police-based JDP's are in existence or development.

Court Clinics: Court Clinics are responsible for providing all court-ordered forensic and clinical evaluations in the Juvenile, District, and Superior Courts in Massachusetts. Comprised mainly of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and other licensed professionals, specified court clinicians evaluate individuals with suspected mental health difficulties who come to the attention of the justice system, often around issues of Competence to Stand Trial (CST) or Criminal Responsibility (CR), civil commitment related to substance use and mental illness and other types of evaluations. Juvenile Court Clinic activities also include evaluations of youth regarding a number of matters ranging from delinquency to evaluations pertaining to Children Requiring Assistance (CRA).

Inpatient Forensic Evaluations: DMH Forensic Services Designated Forensic Professionals (DFP) and Certified Juvenile Court Clinicians II (CJCC II) conduct inpatient examinations of defendants on issues primarily pertaining to CST and CR or aid-in-sentencing and coordinates with inpatient treatment teams and the courts. Individuals sent for evaluation may be committed for ongoing care and treatment beyond the evaluation period. Inpatient evaluators complete other forensic evaluations that include competence to stand trial updates and Independent Forensic Risk Assessments, which consist of risk assessment evaluations conducted by DFP's that set forth in DMH policy 10-01R.

Specialty Court Services: DMH Forensic Services provides funding for clinical services at two Mental Health Courts in the Massachusetts District Court (Plymouth and Springfield), and provides support and assistance to Boston Municipal Court Mental Health Courts, supports Veterans Treatment Courts and Drug Courts with further plans for expansion in close partnership with the Trial Court.

Justice-Involved Veterans: Forensic Services is involved with the administration and funding of programs and services for Justice Involved Veterans, including MISSION Implementation services for Veterans who are ordered to this service by the court post-adjudication as an alternative to incarceration for veterans with co-occurring mental health and substance use challenges. DMH Forensic Services also provides funding to the Department of Veterans Services to assist with peer support services for veterans who are court-involved.

Forensic Transition Team (FTT): DMH established the Forensic Transition Team in 1998. FTT is a boundary spanning, statewide service of DMH Forensic Services that ensures an effective reentry plan for DMH-service authorized individuals from state prisons and county houses of correction.

Certification and Training: DMH Forensic Services oversees, through its regulations, the certification and training of Designated Forensic Professionals, Qualified Social Workers, and Certified Juvenile Court Clinicians.

Segregation and Specialized Mental Health Unit Audits: Supervision of dental, medical and mental health care for inmates in Department of Correction segregation units as well as review of care provided at Evaluation and Stabilization Units in two Houses of Correction.

Collaboration with Criminal Justice Information Systems and the Sex Offender Registry Board: Collaboration with these agencies related to gathering background information under certain provisions.