



FY2011 RECOMMENDATION/FY11-D23 USE THE EPIC PROGRAM AS AN EXAMPLE TO EDUCATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS

Status: Implementation Complete

Actions/Updates

2012 ACTION/IMPLEMENTATION

EPIC is actively working to educate criminal justice professionals around the state.

Description

Use the Commission's Evidence-based Practices Training Initiative (EPIC) as a vehicle to educate criminal justice professionals in effective behavioral health assessment and treatment.

Agencies Responsible

Division of Criminal Justice, EPIC

Discussion

The Commission's Evidence-Based Practices Training Initiative (Evidence Based Practices Implementation for Capacity, or EPIC) should include in its overall plan the training of professionals to use a comprehensive approach to treatment matching. This requires educating those involved in sentencing and supervision (judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation/parole/community corrections officers and supervisors, and private treatment providers) on strategies to enhance successful treatment completion. This approach requires an understanding of the need to view behavioral health treatment as a response to a chronic rather than an acute medical condition.

The length of supervision and treatment must align to produce the most optimal offender outcome. Judges, supervising officers, and treatment providers must work together to link the length of the sentence with the treatment plan. Individuals progress through drug abuse treatment at different rates, but research concludes that lasting reductions in criminal activity and substance abuse are related to longer lengths of treatment. A longer continuum of treatment and supervision may be indicated for offenders with severe or multiple problems, and shorter periods may be indicated for those with less serious problems—but the duration of the sentence and the period of treatment should be synchronized to maximize positive outcomes.

Legal pressure can improve retention in treatment, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (see footnote)..

Supervising officers and other judicial officials must carefully leverage this pressure specifically to improve offender participation in, and completion of, treatment requirements. Outcomes for drug abusing offenders in the community can be improved when supervising officers actively monitor treatment compliance. Further, supervising officers must skillfully encourage and promote each offender to successfully complete treatment.

The education process should include the following information, explaining that:

- 1. Objective offender assessments and case management should result in treatment matching in the areas of frequency, duration and intensity; and that it is the responsibility of the court, those who supervise offenders in the community, and those in the healthcare system to ensure the appropriate treatment is delivered.*
- 2. The dynamics of addiction and recovery should be delivered to those involved in sentencing and supervision (judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, field staff and supervisors, and private treatment providers) to maximize treatment resources and promote recidivism reduction.*

Footnotes

Note: Please see http://www.drugabuse.gov/PODAT_CJ/faqs/faqs1.html#3.