

**The Gulf Coast Center**  
**Texas Partners in Crisis Jail Diversion Task Force**  
**DIVERSION ACTION PLAN**

Original Submission: February, 2005

Status Report Update: January, 2008

The Gulf Coast Center (“Center”) and the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force submitted their original Diversion Action Plan in February 2005 in response to the community needs of Galveston and Brazoria Counties. Since that time, the plan has been periodically reviewed and updated as necessary; with previous formal status updates provided January 2006, February 2007, and July 2007. The plan and updates continue to be posted to the Center’s website, and remain an integral part of the Center’s Local Plan. The first “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force meeting was held in September 2002. The task force members continue to meet; working towards the successful implementation of the action steps and goals outlined in the plan, addressing and adapting changes as necessary. Community leaders from Galveston and Brazoria Counties; along with representatives from the Center, judiciary, law enforcement, probation, advocacy groups, psychiatry, hospital administration and family members are included in the membership. The collaborative efforts of the task force and the achieved goals from the Diversion Action Plan have resulted in demonstrated progress; as well as community recognition, and expanded cooperative activities to address jail diversion related issues. In addition to increased mental health care and attention at both county jails and during the jail screening process; there has been a gradual decrease in the number of admissions to the local psychiatric unit and utilization of emergency room services, which can be directly contributed to the action steps and goals implemented as a part of the Diversion Action Plan. In November 2006, members of the Mobile Response Team – one of the original project goals identified in the Diversion Action Plan – were recognized by NAMI Gulf Coast with a “Heroes in the Fight” award for their efforts and dedication to those served. And finally, the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force members have expanded their collaborative efforts in advocating for increased local and state funding; as well as submitting multiple foundation and grant applications to further support the achievement of the goals and action steps outlined in the Diversion Action Plan. The Center submits this update as required.

**Diversion Action Plan Action Steps, Goals, and Current Status**

- **Maintenance of a common shared database**

Preservation of a database that shares information on individuals with mental illness who are impacted by the University of Texas Medical Branch of Galveston (“UTMB”), law enforcement, jails, juvenile justice centers, and Center; upgrading and expanding as appropriate. Through an automated information system, jails and juvenile detention centers will electronically transfer their census and pertinent data, on a daily/weekly basis to mental health (“MH”) providers in the area. This data will assist with continuity of care, and in the electronic matching of jail and detention records with the Department of State Health Services (“DSHS”) CARE data system. One of the primary focuses of this database will be to provide early and on-going identification of consumers in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

**Action Steps:**

Goal 1: Implement Jail Batching system to conduct required CARE system database check.

*Schedule:* Completed as planned – August 2007

*Primary Responsible(s):* The Gulf Coast Center

Goal 2: Continued maintenance of shared database that provides basic, critical information on individuals with mental illness who are impacted by members of the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force; updating and enhancing the shared database and available information as possible.

*Schedule:* On-going

*Primary Responsible(s):* “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force

*Status Update January 2008:*

The Center completed the implementation of the Jail Batching system to conduct the required State CARE system database check mandated by contractual requirements with the Department of State Health Services (“DSHS”) in August 2007 as scheduled. The members of the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force continue with their efforts to assure quality data and access. The Center continues to coordinate and provide primary MIS oversight to the reporting process and data elements. As determined and recommended by members of the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force, efforts will be on-going to refine and further define data needs; expanding and enhancing the process as technology and the community system will facilitate.

• **Mobile Response Teams**

Continue maintenance of the Mobile Response Teams operating in Galveston and Brazoria County, expanding and enhancing as possible. In addition to addressing psychiatric and psychiatric medication needs of individuals who fail to meet their mental health appointments or who may need additional assistance; a key focus of these units will continue to be a pre-booking strategy to divert consumers prior to a disturbance or incident, resulting in an arrest or detention.

Action Steps:

Goal 1: Identify funding opportunities and collaborative activities that will facilitate not only the maintenance of; but expansion and enhancement of the Mobile Response Teams.

*Schedule:* On-going

*Primary Responsible(s):* “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force

*Status Update January 2008:*

The original federal grant award used in developing these teams, ended in February 2007; and continued funding under the federal program was an option. Prior to the grant’s end, the Center and other members of the Jail Diversion Task Force have been seeking continuation funding for this critical and successful service. In partnership with UTMB of Galveston, a grant request was submitted to the Meadow’s Foundation to provide continued funding support for the Mobile Response Teams. In December 2007, the Center was notified that the request was funded but at a lesser amount than originally requested. The Meadow’s Foundation award will provide funding support through July 2009. During December 2007 and January 2008, the award budget was reviewed and adapted to the lesser award amount; which resulted in having only one three-member Mobile Response Team to serve both Galveston and Brazoria counties. During the second year of the recently awarded Meadow’s Foundation grant, the Mobile Response Team is to be adjusted to provide increased focus to individuals dually-diagnosed. The Center and other Jail Diversion Task Force members will continue in their efforts to partner, locate, and secure additional funding support to continue and expand the highly successful Mobile Response Team.

- **Expand coordination between Juvenile Justice and Mental Health service providers**

Enhance the collaborative efforts between the local Juvenile Justice and Mental Health service providers; including the evaluation and development of Mental Health teams at the Juvenile Justice detention/boot camp sites to provide crisis screening and assessment for inpatient hospitalization for juveniles in their care; improving after hours emergency response and the completion of crisis screenings; and the provision of wraparound services to children/adolescents.

Action Steps:

Goal 1: Evaluate the development of Mental Health teams comprised of licensed mental health professionals to be located at the Galveston County Juvenile Justice and Brazoria County Juvenile Justice sites.

*Schedule:* Completed as planned – January 2007

*Primary Responsible(s):* “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force

Goal 2: Increased involvement and collaborative efforts between the local Juvenile Justice Systems and the Gulf Coast Center.

*Schedule:* On-going

*Primary Responsible(s):* The Gulf Coast Center

Goal 3: Wraparound services for eligible children/adolescents served by the Center will be provided.

*Schedule:* On-going

*Primary Responsible(s):* The Gulf Coast Center

Status Update January 2008:

During FY2007, the Center entered into agreements with Juvenile Justice of Brazoria and Galveston Counties to support one full-time qualified mental health professional (“QMHP”) position in each county to provide community based mental health services for juveniles on probation as provided for under Resiliency and Disease Management. These staff and services were continued into FY2008. During the fall of FY2008, the Center enter into memorandum of agreements with the Juvenile Justice agencies of Brazoria and Galveston Counties for the collaborative effort on a Misdemeanor Prevention Project to serve youth with multiple misdemeanors providing services necessary to keep the youth from being detained locally or at TYC, from obtaining further legal charges, and from being placed outside the home. The agreements provided funding support for additional staff and operational expenses. With regards to the provision of wraparound services, the Center continues to provide this as a part of Resiliency and Disease Management to those children who by their treatment assessment are identified as eligible to receive these intensive services and whose parents commit to the treatment regiment. However, due to assessment guidelines and other family factors, the number of qualifying children remains low; and unfortunately there is no other funding available to provide these intensive services. The Center in partnership with other community agencies serving juveniles continue to work together in managing limited resources to maximize service availability; evaluating collaborative opportunities to expand and enhance services and their availability.

- **Support for Peace Officer Crisis Intervention Training**

Increased support and emphasis on the provision of mental health training to newly commissioned police officers as well as continued mental health in-service to officers already on the force. Through

community and statewide education and advocacy, increase awareness of the requirements and resulting benefits of Crisis Intervention Training will be provided.

Action Steps:

Goal 1: Improve the provision, education, and understanding of the benefits of the completion of Crisis Intervention Training; encouraging local police departments, officials, and officers to participate in available training opportunities.

*Schedule:* Completed as planned - January 2008

*Primary Responsible(s):* The Gulf Coast Center

Goal 2: Increase local and statewide advocacy and education of Crisis Intervention Training requirements and community benefits.

*Schedule:* On-going

*Primary Responsible(s):* “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force

Status Update January 2008:

Through contractual agreement with Gulf Coast NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) entered into December 2007, Crisis Intervention Training (“CIT”) training and support will be provided. Gulf Coast NAMI, in collaboration with Alvin Community College, will provide Crisis Intervention Training to law enforcement cadets. The training will be consistent with certification requirements of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Education (TCLEOSE); and shall include (but not limited to) information on mental illness, impact on mental illness on family members, and de-escalation techniques. Additionally, as possible, stipends can be made available as requested to local police departments to encourage and facilitate attendance and completion of the training. The Center and others remain strongly committed to this goal; and will continue their efforts in community and lawmaker education.

• **Provision and Access Enhancement of Community Based Services and Supports**

Review and development of opportunities to improve or enhance the provision of and access to community based services and supports for individuals entering into or out of (or at risk of) the criminal justice system; focusing on increasing the availability of opportunities to return to treatment, providing support and assistance to accessing available benefits and maintaining benefit eligibility, address the barriers to treatment, and provide a neighborhood network or safety net with multiple points of assistance. Through multiple collaborative opportunities and activities, members of the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force will evaluate and where applicable, submit funding requests or work in partnership to improve the availability of community based services.

Action Steps:

Goal 1: Maintenance of Jail Screening Services in both county jails.

*Schedule:* Completed as planned – September 2007

*Primary Responsible(s):* The Gulf Coast Center

Goal 2: Development and implementation of MH Adult Specialty Clinics.

*Schedule:* August 2008

*Primary Responsible(s):* The Gulf Coast Center

- Goal 3: Review, evaluate, and where possible implement opportunities to allow greater access to psychiatric and prescribed psychiatric medications.  
*Schedule:* On-going  
*Primary Responsible(s):* “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force
- Goal 4: Assure that inmates have immediate access to Gulf Coast Center services if adjudicated by the continuation of Jail Liaisons located within each county jail.  
*Schedule:* On-going  
*Primary Responsible(s):* The Gulf Coast Center
- Goal 5: Staffing support and continuation of Community Based Casemanagement at identified community support agencies and critical points of service.  
*Schedule:* On-going  
*Primary Responsible(s):* “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force
- Goal 6: Evaluate and develop opportunities for increased community based residential; including short term crisis residential, safe havens, or permanent housing options.  
*Schedule:* On-going  
*Primary Responsible(s):* “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force

*Status Update January 2008:*

In September 2007 the Center was successful in securing continued funding support for the staffing of a QMHP staff person for each county jail who works directly with the jails in evaluating those screened and processed; as well as the additional funding for a Jail Screener for Brazoria County. Funding support from the two county commissioner’s courts has assisted in facilitating these designated staff for each county jail. The Jail Screener is a part of the daily jail docket hearings; with the mental health contact sheet an integral part of each booking folder. The local District Attorney offices are working with local judges to use probation as a tool for treatment compliance; and will provide conditions for probation. The Center and members of the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force continue to evaluate and revise the process; with additional recommendations for change and implementation provided as identified. The Center continues to provide periodic evaluation status reports to the task force members. The two Jail Liaison staff work with county jail and law enforcement personnel, identify consumers and needs, conduct where needed assessment, and assist with assuring medication continuance and return to treatment services. The Center and members of the Jail Diversion Task Force, continue to seek additional funding to further expand and enhancing the staffing and service support to the county jails.

In January 2008, the Center submitted a funding request under the Outpatient Competency Restoration Program. The two primary goals of the Center’s proposed Outpatient Competency Restoration Program are to reduce the number of individuals determined to be Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST), with mental illness or co-occurring psychiatric and substance use disorders, on the State Mental Health Hospital clearinghouse waiting list for inpatient competency restoration services; and to increase prompt access to clinically appropriate outpatient competency restoration services for individuals determined to be IST. Though at this time the Center has no one on the clearinghouse waiting list; unfortunately an individual with mental illness or co-occurring psychiatric and substance use disorders will wait anywhere from five (4) to eight (8) months for a hearing in Brazoria County or Galveston County to determine if they are competent to stand trial. The local goal is to implement competency restoration measures while the person is waiting for the hearing to determine competency

and thus eliminate or reduce the need for the person to be admitted to the State Mental Health Facility for competency restoration. The proposed project includes one LPHA, two casemanagers, and one Jail Screener for Galveston County; plus funds to support weekly access in both counties to psychiatric physician services. Additionally, the request included funding support for medications and housing assistance; areas identified as barriers that need to be address.

The Center – as a part of the Gulf Coast Homeless Coalition’s 2007 Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) Continuum of Care submissions – included a project request for HUD Supportive Housing funds for the operation of a new six-bed Permanent Housing program for Brazoria County to provide residential support and casemanagement assistance. The request also included the renewal of the Center’s existing HUD funded residential support and casemanagement projects. Though all of the Center’s currently HUD funded programs were renewed with this request, this new project was not awarded. During July 2007, the Center was awarded a short-term Emergency Shelter Grant from Brazoria County to provide support for one full-time staff to provide brief casemanagement and support to individuals in the Brazoria County area who are homeless and in need of emergency assistance. Though the grant does not provide any direct consumer expense support, the grant provides funding support for the critically needed staffing. Unfortunately HUD funds have limited availability and the process competitive, but the Center and the members of the “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force continue to pursue and develop other opportunities for community residential for individuals with mental illness. In December 2006, the Center entered into an agreement with the Wood Group, to provide a Mental Health Treatment Training Residential Program at the Medicaid rate, less the State match. The program’s start was delayed due to a delay in the receipt of the State’s final certification for the facility scheduled to be used; but now has a tentative start date of March 2008. The Center continues to operate one HUD funded Transition House, with twelve supervised beds; and three HUD funded Permanent Housing projects, which provide residential support for thirty-six slots for up to two years. All of these programs were recently renewed with the award of the 2007 HUD Continuum of Care.

Access to psychiatrists and prescribed psychiatric medications continues to be a critical mental health treatment element. Over the past two years, the Center has taken considerable action to expand and improve greater access to psychiatrists and prescribed psychiatric medications. These include the submission of multiple additional funding requests specifically for the support of prescribed psychiatric medications; increased and enhanced direct assistance to consumers in applying for available benefits; maximized patient assistance programs; and implemented telemedicine in the Brazoria County Jail, and most recently in the Center’s Southern Brazoria Mental Health Outpatient Clinic. The Center participates in the East Texas Behavioral Healthcare Network (“ETBHN”) pharmacy program; which provided effective and efficient pharmacy services, and assured best cost value of medications – maximizing limited resources. The Center is continuing to evaluate ways to assure immediate access to services for those adjudicated; yet maintain capacity and assure continued service. The Center has expanded staffing support to the local jails, to complement previously existing mental health support and services there. These Center staff work directly with the jail during the screening process, monitor current Center consumers to assure continuance of assessed mental health services, and assist in the referral process for those identified as needed further treatment. To facilitate access to physician services, the Center is furthering its use of telemedicine; currently providing physician service via telemedicine at two sites: Brazoria County Jail and the Angleton MH Adult Community Service Center. Due to the success of these two telemedicine sites and the increasing difficulty to obtain physician services, the Center continues to evaluate expanding

telemedicine activities at other service locations. In August 2007, the Center received funding to purchase additional telemedicine equipment acquisition and upgrades.

The Center and other “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force members continue looking for opportunities to assure and enhance the availability and access to community based services and supports; exploring various collaborative activities, submitting multiple grant applications, and advocating where appropriate for increased services. The Center and other “Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force have identified several expanded goals for the current fiscal year; including the maintenance of mental health casemanagement staff at critical community points of access; and the development and implementation of at least two specialty clinics (3 hours/week), one in each county, to address wait list consumers, including those individuals released from the county jails. Services at these specialty clinics will be geared specifically to the needs of the individuals; working to minimize return to the criminal justice and referral to available services and benefits.

Approved for Submission, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008  
G. Michael Winburn, Executive Director  
The Gulf Coast Center

*Distribution:*

“Texas Partners in Crisis” Jail Diversion Task Force  
Gulf Coast Center’s Board of Trustees February, 2008 Board Meeting  
Gulf Coast Center Executive Management Team  
Posted: Gulf Coast Center Website: [www.gcmhmr.com](http://www.gcmhmr.com)