

## 2008 Showcase in Excellence Award Recipient

### Maricopa County Adult Probation Department “Supervision of Seriously Mentally Ill Probationers”



#### **SMI Units**

*Highest Ranking Official:*  
Barbara A. Broderick  
Chief Probation Officer

#### *Contact Person:*

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#### *Type of work:*

The Maricopa County Adult Probation Department conducts investigations and prepares reports to assist judges with release and sentencing decisions. The Department also supervises unsentenced offenders on pretrial supervision and sentenced offenders on probation. Over 21,000 presentence reports are completed annually and the Department supervises approximately 34,000 probationers.

*Workforce:* 1,244

#### **Testimonial of Value** of Arizona State Quality Awards Program

“The Showcase in Excellence award application and review process assisted our staff in developing a deeper understanding of process improvement and in building a stronger skill set for pursuing performance excellence. We appreciate the unique opportunity for self-assessment, independent feedback, and public recognition provided by the Arizona Quality Alliance.”

*-Barbara Broderick, Chief Probation Officer*

#### **Highlights of Organizational Process:**

##### Process Results:

- SMI probationer revocations to prison dropped between FY2004-2007 (from just over 40% in FY2004 to 20% in FY2007).
- Between FY2004-FY2007, the rate of SMI probationers who successfully completed probation increased (from just under 60% in FY2004 to just under 80% in FY2007).
- Between FY2004-FY2007, fewer than 5% of SMI probationers under specialized supervision had a new felony conviction (less than the standard probation population).
- The average daily cost of a general inmate in the Maricopa County jail was \$62.29 in FY2007. During the same time period, the average daily cost of SMI probation supervision was \$6.33.
- When compared to other SMI programs, Maricopa County Adult Probation Department’s supervision indicates a markedly lower recidivism rate (4.5% for MCAPD compared with between 16-34% for other programs).

## The Process:

- The Department's process for supervising seriously mentally ill (SMI) offenders provides a systematic approach to not only meeting the needs of this population, but to making improvements in the services and outcomes for these probationers, while addressing public safety interests.
- Traditionally, SMI probationers do not fare well with the standard structure of probation, commonly resulting in probation revocation and prison commitments. However, SMI supervision, which provides oversight of probationer medication monitoring, addresses substance abuse and mental health issues, links probationers to mental health services and (if needed) educational services, enhances community safety.
- Key requirements for the process were determined by an assessment of the needs of the probationers, which were not being met otherwise. Key requirements of the process include reduced caseloads with specially-trained officers, a screening tool to identify and prioritize cases, collaborative problem-solving techniques to address special needs of SMI clients, and a comprehensive Mental Health Court, separate from the typical court process.
- Probationers identified as SMI enter the process after being sentenced to a term of probation supervision. The case is screened for placement on a SMI caseload, a specialized assignment that monitors persons categorized as SMI (e.g. those with an Axis 1 diagnosis, which is a category of mental disorder specified by the DSM-IV), as well as probationers with a functional impairment, a history of psychiatric hospitalization, or a need for case management services. The assignment is reserved for cases with the highest needs, determined by level of risk, level of functioning, access to services, or those in crisis.
- SMI probationers accepted onto the caseload are given an orientation of expectations, and the probation officer establishes contact with the probationer's case manager, treatment provider(s), and family/support network. If the probationer remains stable, he or she can be transferred back to a standard probation caseload. However, if the probationer does not comply with conditions of probation, the probation officer has a range of response options, depending on the nature of the noncompliant behavior.
- The Mental Health Court was established in 2002, and was designed as a probation revocation and review hearing court specifically for SMI probationers. The Court uses a team approach consisting of a judge, probation officer, probation supervisor, defense attorney, prosecutor, case manager, representatives from the Regional Behavioral Health Authority, court liaisons, and treatment experts.