

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEES ON THE DISABLED AND
SPECIAL NEEDS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Friday, March 20, 2015
10:35 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN, CO-CHAIR
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., CO-CHAIR
COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION 150131 - Resolution authorizing
Council's Committees on the Disabled and
Special Needs and Public Safety to hold joint
public hearings investigating the barriers
faced by people with serious mental health
issues who are transitioning from
incarceration to the Philadelphia community.

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1
2 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Good
3 morning. This hearing is called to
4 order. This is a joint public hearing of
5 the City Council Committees on the
6 Disabled and Special Needs and Public
7 Safety. The purpose of this public
8 hearing is to hear testimony regarding
9 reentry from incarceration in
10 Philadelphia for individuals with serious
11 mental illness authorized by Resolution
12 150131.

13 Does anyone have any opening
14 remarks?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'll just
17 open with a few remarks.

18 I want to thank everyone for
19 being here today as we examine the
20 barriers faced by people with serious
21 mental health issues who are
22 transitioning from jails and prisons to
23 the Philadelphia community.

24 Here in the United States,
25 approximately 2.5 million people are

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2 incarcerated. Ninety-five percent of
3 them get released within 12 months. Of
4 this 95 percent, two-thirds of them are
5 rearrested within three years.

6 Studies have consistently found
7 elevated rates of mental illness in
8 prisons, approximately 16 percent and
9 sometimes higher. Yet data shows that
10 the prevalence of mental illness is only
11 6 percent among the general population.

12 Community reentry is not as
13 simple as just leaving an institution and
14 picking up right where you left off.
15 Individuals with psychiatric disabilities
16 released from correctional facilities
17 have many needs that require a
18 multi-systemic approach.

19 In addition to mental health
20 treatment, many individuals with
21 psychiatric disabilities confront
22 structural barriers such as limited
23 access to food, clothing, shelter,
24 transportation, healthcare, and personal
25 identification. An inability to address

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2 these most basic needs can lead
3 individuals to return to criminal
4 activity.

5 Additionally, many returning
6 citizens often lack social capital to
7 help them successfully reintegrate back
8 into their communities. They've often
9 returned to broken or non-existent family
10 ties and friendships. They lack high
11 school diplomas, employable skills, and
12 other valuable social supports to steady
13 themselves. They rely on their providers
14 and other professional workers, including
15 the witnesses presenting here today, to
16 help them get back on their feet.

17 We already know that community
18 reentry can be extremely challenging for
19 anyone, but when an individual also has
20 an underlying mental health issue,
21 reentry can be that much more difficult.
22 This is an important issue to examine,
23 not only because of the impact it has on
24 the welfare of the community at large,
25 but because addressing the needs of

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2 individuals with psychiatric disabilities
3 is the responsible thing to do.

4 It is in everyone's best
5 interest if we are able to help people
6 with serious mental health issues
7 successfully return to the community to
8 become productive, law-abiding citizens.
9 We're hoping to begin the conversation
10 here today to discuss how we could be
11 more supportive of this population and
12 ensure their transition into the
13 community after incarceration is
14 successful.

15 So I would like to bring up the
16 first panel. I would like to ask Ray
17 Zeigler, who is a certified peer
18 specialist and a returning citizen, to
19 come and present testimony.

20 Mr. Zeigler, if you can make
21 yourself comfortable at the table and if
22 you can identify yourself for the record
23 and then proceed with your testimony.

24 (Witness approached witness
25 table.)

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2 MR. ZEIGLER: Good morning,
3 Councilmen and Councilwomen.

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Good
5 morning.

6 MR. ZEIGLER: Good morning.
7 Yes. My name is Raymond Zeigler and I'm
8 a returning citizen.

9 I had wrote something down to
10 give you a brief biography of who I am.

11 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Take your
12 time. Can you just pull the microphone
13 closer to you.

14 MR. ZEIGLER: Sure. Sure.

15 My name is Raymond Zeigler and
16 I have been in and out of prison since I
17 was eight years old. I was released from
18 SCI Graterford Prison in 2010 after
19 serving 20 years for a crime I committed
20 while under the influence of crack
21 cocaine. I have been using drugs and
22 alcohol for close to 40 years, and every
23 time I used, the end result would be
24 prison.

25 In 1981, I was sent to SCI Camp

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2 Hill Prison for voluntary manslaughter.

3 While I was there, I learned that I could
4 not read or write, not even at a third
5 grade level. I learned this when I took
6 the GED testing, which I flunked twice
7 and only earned it by two points the
8 third time.

9 While serving the 20-year
10 prison sentence, I enrolled in a business
11 management course with Montgomery County
12 Community College, which lead to
13 achieving an Associate's Degree. I was
14 informed by other men in prison that
15 Villanova University was giving out
16 scholarships. So I took the test with
17 them and earned one of the scholarships.
18 In 2010, I received my Bachelor's Degree
19 and am now working on a dual Master's
20 Degree with Eastern Mennonite University.
21 The degrees are a Master in Divinity and
22 the other one is in Conflict
23 Transformation. In addition, I have
24 received two journeymen's electrical and
25 electronics training.

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2 Upon my prison release in 2010,
3 my mother suggested I should talk to
4 someone in mental health. I took her
5 advice and learned that I am bipolar and
6 have trauma that stemmed from my youth
7 and prison experiences. I am in
8 treatment for both. With the help from
9 the Department of Behavior and Health
10 Intellectual disAbility Services, I
11 received training as a certified peer
12 specialist and forensic specialist, among
13 other trainings, to better help me in
14 supporting other men and women who want
15 to live a life of recovery. Today, I am
16 employed at Greater Philadelphia Asian
17 Social Services, GPASS, working as a
18 certified peer specialist. My
19 responsibilities include weekly drug and
20 alcohol outpatient group sessions, IOP
21 and OP; writing drug and alcohol progress
22 notes, DAP; helping men and women with
23 employment and peer support. As needed,
24 I also do intensive outpatient sessions.

25 These are just a few of the

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2 duties that I do with GPASS. But apart
3 from GPASS, I go around the City and I
4 speak at different providers' facilities
5 and just whether I can plant a seed of
6 hope in the men and women who are on this
7 journey to get back -- to regain their
8 life.

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Does that
10 conclude your opening remarks?

11 MR. ZEIGLER: Well, I don't
12 know exactly the protocol as to how
13 things are done. I just wanted to read
14 my biography first.

15 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: That's
16 fine. If you don't mind, we may have a
17 few questions for you.

18 MR. ZEIGLER: Sure. Sure.
19 Sure.

20 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: How
21 supportive do you think, with the
22 recidivism that you had with the
23 correctional facilities, how supportive
24 was the mental health system to you when
25 you came out of prison?

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2 MR. ZEIGLER: Well, if I may
3 say --

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And you
5 were not diagnosed until recently as
6 having a mental health issue.

7 MR. ZEIGLER: Correct. And
8 that was only through the help of my
9 state parole officer and my mother. He
10 was very supportive, and he suggested,
11 him and my mother, suggested that I look
12 to that area, because he kept asking me
13 the question, what is it about prison you
14 like so much? What was it about every
15 time you get out, you go right back?
16 What was it about the street life that I
17 liked?

18 Well, I'm one that was in the
19 street. I was the street. I loved the
20 street more than I loved my life. I now
21 understand that. Now, as I look at a lot
22 of these other young men and women who
23 are in the street, yeah, they come from a
24 different era than what I come from,
25 because when I was out in the street, how

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2 distorted this may sound, there was a
3 code of ethics among such criminals, and
4 we respected each other as opposed to not
5 killing each other and all the stuff that
6 they doing today.

7 Well, while in Graterford, I
8 began to work on myself and ask
9 questions, what's going on with me, and I
10 learned some things about myself that,
11 you know, I had low self-esteem. You
12 know, I didn't want to grow up. I was
13 immature. I thought the world owed me
14 something, because I was angry. But I
15 wasn't angry at the world. I was really
16 angry at me, because I wanted to be
17 successful. I wanted people to see me as
18 equal, but, however, I wasn't doing
19 things to allow people to see me in that
20 light.

21 As I talk to a lot of men and
22 women today through counseling over at
23 GPASS, that's me. Many of the men and
24 women, these young men and women, they
25 want to be heard. They have a say, but,

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2 however, one contradicting aspect that I
3 see in their lives, they get out of
4 prison and when they get out of prison,
5 they are stipulated with house arrest.
6 Then they got to stay at a program for
7 three days - Monday, Wednesday, and
8 Friday. And then when they want to
9 get -- they looking for employment, they
10 want to make a contribution back into
11 their baby mother lives with their kids,
12 but they are held back by the system
13 because of house arrest and other things.

14 Now, I know that I'm not naive
15 that men and women commit crimes, because
16 I was that man and I was that woman,
17 because I committed crimes. I made it do
18 what it do. I'm not going to lie.
19 That's who I was. Today, I'm no longer
20 that person, but I do know what will
21 drive a person into trying to get a
22 couple dollars in their pockets, and they
23 going to get it any way they could, sadly
24 to say.

25 So a lot of men and women I'm

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2 talking to, they come in the facility and
3 they're angry. Well, Zeig -- they
4 call -- my nickname is Zeig, short for my
5 last name Zeigler. So they say, Zeig,
6 when -- they say, Zeig, how can you tell
7 me you're going to help me with a job
8 when Probation and Parole won't let me
9 get a job? My parole officer or my
10 probation officer is on my top. They
11 won't even let me out the house to go to
12 the library to do research on the
13 computer.

14 So I tell them about
15 CareerLink. I tell them about the Urban
16 League. I tell them about the NAACP. I
17 tell them, get the support of a bigger
18 establishment that has the network
19 ability to really help you, because the
20 only thing I can do is go on the
21 Internet, help you do some research where
22 I'm at at GPASS, and that's it. They
23 can't even do that, so they become angry.
24 They become angry. And a lot of them do
25 have trauma in their lives.

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2 And I must add this, is that
3 many of our young men -- many of our
4 children, babies, because of the crime
5 that's happened in our community, they
6 walk out their front door, these little
7 kids, and they may see a crime scene -
8 blood, cops, yellow tape, the whole nine
9 yards. What does their parent do? Put
10 them right in the car, take them to their
11 get-set center or school or whatever.
12 But what happened to that processing and
13 talking to these kids so when these kids
14 as they grow, to me, they become immune
15 to hurting people or being hurt. And
16 it's -- to me, I don't have the words to
17 say, because I'm passionate about
18 planting the seed of hope in children as
19 men and women planted the seed in me.

20 I remember Councilman Curtis
21 Jones and I remember Councilwoman Mrs.
22 Blackwell, and I know her husband. I was
23 applying for a job before I got locked up
24 during the 20 years at the DoubleTree,
25 and Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell was just

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2 leaving for lunch and they stopped. The
3 remarkable thing, they stopped and had a
4 conversation with me, and this was over
5 20 years ago, and I remember that. Just
6 by them stopping, having that -- just
7 that word or two with me empowered me.
8 Even though I continued on my life of
9 crime, but I didn't forget that. And
10 when they came to Graterford, Senator
11 LeAnna Washington and many others,
12 Shirley Kitchen, I was right there,
13 because I wanted to be seen as equal as
14 opposed to someone who has been discarded
15 by society.

16 Now, looking at what's going on
17 today, many of the young men and women,
18 they have that same mindset as I do.
19 They want a chance. I think if they had
20 other options or other alternatives,
21 because I don't think no one wake up and
22 say, I want to go to jail today. You
23 know, even though their actions show it
24 that they going to jail today, because
25 they get up and they want to go back out

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2 there to the corner and they want to sell
3 their drugs or do what they do, you know.

4 Peers such as myself,
5 because -- and I must say this too. We
6 have a lot of programs that's operating
7 today. A lot of these programs really is
8 nothing but frauds, because what they do,
9 they teach the men and women that's
10 getting out of prison how to fill out an
11 application, how to do a resume. Well,
12 many of the men and women in prison
13 already know some of this stuff. They
14 don't need to be sitting up in these
15 programs for four and five months while
16 the program collecting all of this cash.
17 They need some type of job or some type
18 of stipend to say, Okay, while you're
19 here, we going to support you. And I
20 remember there was programs like that
21 back in the day that helped me.

22 So I don't have any answer.
23 The only thing I can do is give you my
24 life's experiences and know what worked
25 for me and I know will work for other

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2 young men and women in my same situation.

3 Yes, I take my medication, which I don't

4 like to take, you know. Because of my

5 passion, sometimes my mouth get me in

6 trouble, but that's everyone, you know.

7 We're passionate about something.

8 So I just know it can work. It

9 can work if a lot of these agencies and

10 programs be more genuine to the men and

11 women and have more peers, a lot of them

12 such as myself. There's a lot of young

13 men and women out there who are certified

14 peer specialists or who can be a good

15 peer to a lot of these young men and

16 women and say, Hey, look, man, if I can

17 do it, I know you can do it. I've seen

18 it. I've seen it.

19 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I have a

20 couple questions, but I think your

21 testimony has substantially responded to

22 that. I want to thank you for sharing

23 your personal life experience. You're an

24 accomplished certified peer specialist.

25 You've touched on the supports that you

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2 as an individual and others like you who
3 have mental illness, specifically the
4 supports that you need and the supports
5 that you already have, and that's helpful
6 to us to know what supports are
7 successful and what supports you, who
8 have successfully reentered the general
9 population, are advocating for others to
10 have.

11 The other thing that's
12 remarkable and maybe I'll prey upon your
13 privacy for a moment just to share with
14 us if you had an earlier diagnosis that
15 you were bipolar, how do you think that
16 would have changed the events of your
17 life?

18 MR. ZEIGLER: When I was
19 younger, my mother and father like in the
20 late '70s, we used to have family
21 treatment over at Einstein on Broad and
22 Olney, and we used to have family therapy
23 there, and I recall they was giving me
24 these anti-depressant pills. I can't
25 think what it was. They was giving them

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2 to all the kids, because we was too
3 hyper.

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Prozac?

5 MR. ZEIGLER: Not Prozac.

6 There was another one. I was on Prozac,
7 though. That was one of the pills I did
8 used to take later on, but I forgot the
9 pill they used to give kids -- anyway, I
10 was too hyper. I was hyper, I admit. I
11 couldn't stay still. But I was never
12 diagnosed as bipolar or I never knew
13 anything about bipolar. Even up at
14 Graterford talking to the therapists up
15 there, never knew. Never, never knew
16 until I got out and my parole officer,
17 Brian Faver, state parole, he a good dude
18 and he took an interest in me. He seen
19 something in me that I didn't see in
20 myself, and I really give him his props
21 for that.

22 I've come across many probation
23 and parole officers today, and it's just
24 a job to them as opposed to looking at
25 the person first, not as crime, not his

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2 mental illness or whatever it may be, but
3 look at the person as a person. That was
4 looked at at me, and, no, I never was
5 diagnosed as bipolar. I don't know what
6 they diagnosed me with, but I know that I
7 didn't like taking those pills, because
8 every time I went to voice or speak up
9 against something I felt was wrong, my
10 mother used to say, All right, it's time
11 for you to take a pill, and I remember
12 that as a little boy. So when I got out
13 this trip and now was prescribed
14 medication, I started taking it. My mind
15 races at times. The medication calms me
16 down. Today, I'm married, and my wife
17 monitors and watches me.

18 Bipolar I did not understand.
19 You go from one extreme to the other,
20 with no medium. Today, I understand that
21 I must have a medium, and this is what I
22 pass on to a number of the men and women,
23 because they get out of prison and they
24 want to get out that gate running and
25 they want to give themselves a chance, many

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2 of them, but soon -- the first hurdle
3 they hit, boom, they bounce back and go
4 back to that life of crime.

5 So I was not diagnosed as a
6 youth, I don't believe, as bipolar, but
7 about two or three years ago, yes, and I
8 have a better understanding as to my
9 triggers. I know my demarcation line,
10 how far to go. I know how to pump my
11 brakes now.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.
13 Chairman Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
15 much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for
16 bringing this issue to this Chamber to
17 talk about it. You've been on the
18 forefront of all types of critical
19 disabilities and challenges that our
20 citizens have, and I just want to
21 publicly put on the record thank you for
22 bringing that forth in a courageous way.

23 I want to say to you, I'm going
24 to call you Mr. Zeigler today.

25 MR. ZEIGLER: Yes, sir.

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2 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'd just
3 like to add the real courage our
4 witnesses --

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's what
6 I was going to say.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: -- like
8 Mr. Zeigler to come forward.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm going
10 to call you Mr. Zeigler. I met you
11 before.

12 MR. ZEIGLER: Yes, sir,
13 Mr. Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: I know your
15 name, but I'm going to give you the due
16 respect of being in that seat and also
17 recognize your courage, as well as our
18 Chairman asked, for coming forward and
19 sharing with us things that are or have
20 been like taboos that we don't talk about
21 in the community and to be able to let us
22 kind of address it in a public policy
23 way. So I want to thank you for that.

24 MR. ZEIGLER: Thank you,
25 Councilman.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: I have some
3 questions, because I don't know, but I
4 can tell you this, some of the things you
5 describe some of my members have. So we
6 don't know barriers. We don't know -- we
7 can go from zero to 60 on some things
8 too. So we got more in common than
9 probably people give credit for.

10 And the questions I ask aren't
11 just directed to you. It's directed to
12 anyone who can answer them in a way that
13 will come up and testify after you. I'm
14 just trying to get more clarity about
15 this issue.

16 So the first question I'll ask
17 you is, in your opinion -- and there's no
18 A answer, B answer or true/false or
19 whatever you can be helpful with.

20 How many people in your time in
21 prison do you think in that population
22 had mental health issues?

23 MR. ZEIGLER: Seventy-five
24 percent.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: You're

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2 saying to me that you think 75 percent of
3 the people you came in contact with in
4 the general pop had some type of mental
5 health issue?

6 MR. ZEIGLER: Yes, because we
7 all suffered. We used to have a focus
8 group and --

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Can you
10 pull that just a little bit closer.

11 MR. ZEIGLER: I'm sorry.

12 We used to have a group up at
13 Graterford. That's where I did my 20
14 years at. And I met some remarkable men
15 in there. Some of the men you have
16 mentored. And we learned that we all
17 suffer from some form of trauma from our
18 community, which led us to our distorted
19 thinking that led to crime. That's why I
20 would say 75 percent, because 75 percent
21 of Graterford were black and they came
22 from the Philadelphia area. Maybe that
23 number could be a little too high, but
24 I'm just, you know -- it could be lower,
25 I would assume. It could be lower. But

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2 I know that there was a number of men,
3 they suffered with the same things that I
4 suffered from.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: So in your
6 contact with the population -- and I know
7 you're not a certified psychologist. I'm
8 not holding you to -- but just from your
9 observations, if I were to say a
10 spectrum -- and I learned this, there are
11 degrees of mental health issues. From a
12 spectrum of that, how many of them had
13 the mild to the more severe, and what
14 happens when you hit that tipping point
15 and you realize that one of the other
16 individuals in population has a problem?
17 How was that identified and then treated
18 in Graterford?

19 MR. ZEIGLER: It wasn't
20 treated. They was taken straight to the
21 hole, solitary confinement, go down
22 solitary confinement, sometimes for two,
23 three years.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Two or three
25 years?

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2 MR. ZEIGLER: For two or three
3 years, yes. Sometimes psychologists will
4 come down or the counselor will come down
5 and talk to the individual through the
6 door while they're at solitary
7 confinement. How I know that, because
8 they did it to me. I was a solitary
9 confinement boy, you know.

10 I mean, it's sad, bringing back
11 memories back, how I used to respond to
12 the officers because how they responded
13 to me. Again, because of my mental
14 illness, I seen things right as wrong and
15 I seen wrong as right. So when they came
16 down to talk in the hole, they talk, How
17 you doing today, Mr. Zeigler? And they
18 talk through the door. Are you good?
19 This, that and the other, you're being
20 treated okay? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well,
21 we going to prescribe such-and-such,
22 boom. And many of the men and women --
23 or many of the men, I'm sorry, that was
24 there, we just wanted the medication
25 because we know it put us to sleep,

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2 because in that environment, it was a
3 jungle and it was constant hollering and
4 banging on the door. You know, so you
5 couldn't really sleep, but when they came
6 down to give you medication, you knew
7 that that pill will put you to sleep and
8 allow you to get some type of rest while
9 you was down there.

10 So I don't think or I don't
11 believe that it was really addressed up
12 at Graterford like it should have been
13 addressed.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: So it leads
15 to my next question. Remember, these
16 questions are for everybody. You're just
17 the first one up to bat. So this way, I
18 won't have to ask them again and they can
19 proceed with it.

20 But once identified that there
21 was a problem, to what degree was it
22 medicated versus therapy? Like you
23 didn't get the prototypical, Come into my
24 office, sit on the couch, what's wrong,
25 or did they throw a pill at you?

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2 MR. ZEIGLER: They throw a pill
3 at you. And the medication line, you
4 know, we used to line up in the hallway,
5 you know, as you're going down -- coming
6 down the corridor at Graterford once they
7 let you through the sally port, and as
8 you come down the hall there, it's a long
9 walk, and right where they have
10 commissary, there used -- well, they used
11 to be the old 69. They call it old
12 bubble. That line be all the way down
13 the hall, the corridor with people trying
14 to get their medication. That's all it
15 was. People were still living in their
16 addiction too. I can't look past that,
17 because a lot of the men that was up
18 there too, they was under the influence
19 of some type of drug and alcohol for many
20 years. So a lot of the men still was
21 playing games. So a lot of the men used
22 to go to the doctor, to the psych, just
23 so they could get the psychotropic
24 medication, you know, either for personal
25 use or to sell.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: So during
3 that process, fast forward to the time
4 where the window of opportunity to come
5 home opens, how did they prepare you for
6 that reentry?

7 MR. ZEIGLER: That's funny that
8 you ask. It was a joke, because what
9 they do, they would have you go down to
10 school to meet parole eligibilities. You
11 had to go -- you had to have your GED or
12 be working on your GED. However, they
13 have a long list of people trying to get
14 into school, because they only have a
15 certain amount of people that can enter
16 the school. So when they parole date
17 come up, they may be on the list to take
18 the class for GED and that's it as
19 opposed to being actually in the class.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: I think my
21 question speaks more to if an individual
22 has an issue, mental health --

23 MR. ZEIGLER: Oh, mental
24 health, okay.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: So you've

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2 been medicating throughout your time of
3 incarceration.

4 MR. ZEIGLER: Not the whole
5 time.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: So let's say
7 you were, let's say you weren't, on and
8 off. Addressing whatever those issues,
9 those drivers, those triggers are, was
10 there any coaching, any therapy --

11 MR. ZEIGLER: None.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- any
13 preparation --

14 MR. ZEIGLER: None.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- for you
16 to come home --

17 MR. ZEIGLER: No.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- to say,
19 You're going to need to monitor this or
20 take care of that or seek help in this
21 area?

22 MR. ZEIGLER: None, Councilman.
23 None.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So they gave
25 you car fare home and said, Good luck

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2 with that?

3 MR. ZEIGLER: Yes. Yes. That
4 was it. None. Well, they sent me to the
5 halfway house and they sent me to the
6 halfway house with a bag of drugs. They
7 gave it to the correctional officer. He
8 had dropped me off at the halfway house
9 and that would be it. No type of
10 followup on the street. Nothing.
11 Nothing.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 Thank you, Mr. Zeigler.

15 MR. ZEIGLER: Yes, sir,
16 Councilman.

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN:
18 Councilwoman Blackwell.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you. Thank you, Mr. Zeigler, and God
21 bless you. Lucien Blackwell has been
22 gone over 12 years now, and I'm always
23 encouraged when I hear people remember
24 him for his life and service, and thank
25 you for what you're doing to help other

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2 people who pass this path.

3 MR. ZEIGLER: Yes, ma'am.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: God

5 bless you.

6 MR. ZEIGLER: Thank you, ma'am.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you

8 for your testimony and thank you also.

9 I'll echo what Councilwoman Blackwell

10 just said. I'm always thoroughly

11 impressed with her brand and the

12 recollection of so many people

13 recognizing the Blackwells' random acts

14 of professional and public kindness. So

15 thank you for sharing your life

16 experience, and we wish you continued

17 success.

18 MR. ZEIGLER: Thank you. Can I

19 just add one more thing, Councilman?

20 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Yes.

21 MR. ZEIGLER: Employment.

22 That's another major, major hurdle. You

23 know, I recall when our honorable Mayor

24 put out that tax, job tax thing, tax

25 incentive for companies to hire

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2 ex-offenders or returning citizens, and I
3 was blown away how -- I don't think it
4 was -- it was only like one or two, if
5 that, that was -- it was none,
6 Councilman?

7 COUNCILMAN OH: Zero.

8 MR. ZEIGLER: Zero that latched
9 on to that, that tax incentive. So it's
10 not only -- it's society. It's society
11 as to how they're seeing men and women
12 who have made bad choices. Because we
13 all make bad choices. I don't want to
14 get on my soapbox, but we all make bad
15 choices, but yet a lot of the men and
16 women are not allowed to redeem
17 themselves and given another opportunity.

18 Again, thank you for allowing
19 me to testify, and in closing, I would
20 like to just say that I thank my
21 organization, my agency I work for,
22 GPASS, who have given me an opportunity,
23 because like they believed in me. Even
24 the training that I received from the
25 Department of Behavior and Health, and I

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2 did an intern over at MHA, the Mental
3 Health Association, over four months over
4 there, but yet -- they was paying me a
5 stipend, but yet when a job opened up and
6 I met the requirements for that job, they
7 would not hire me, but yet you let me
8 work here for three, four months, the
9 same way with the Department of Behavior
10 and Health.

11 So it was a blow to me, but how
12 many men and women who -- and I had --
13 that was an experience for me, because it
14 was a blessing for me, but I was kind of
15 blown away. I wanted to -- before I got
16 where I'm at today, I wanted to go back
17 out there in them streets. I got friends
18 that still doing they thing out there.
19 And, Councilman, I really, really wanted
20 to go back out there, because nobody
21 would give me a shot. But I stayed
22 steadfast and I didn't want to continue
23 to hurt my family, friends, and loved
24 ones, people who had invested in me. And
25 I believe that if we continue to invest

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2 in some of the men and women today, it
3 will change their way of really looking
4 at themselves. And I think that, you
5 know, they'll have a better chance than
6 what they did have and they could see
7 that they got some gifts in them that
8 they can give back, such as myself.

9 So thank you again for allowing
10 me to, you know, just give you a piece of
11 who I am.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
13 very much. The last thing that you just
14 said reminds me of a program or a
15 strategy that we have in the City of
16 Philadelphia called Focused Deterrence,
17 and part of that is to take those most
18 likely to shoot or be shot and if they --
19 and incarcerate them or take a closer
20 look at them for the infractions and
21 parole and probation violations, but the
22 key part of that also is for the
23 community and the family and friends to
24 come forward and say that you matter, we
25 don't want you to go to jail, we don't

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2 want you to go to prison. And a lot of
3 those individuals are leaving that life
4 and taking jobs at Payless Shoes and
5 Goodwill and other places. So it is that
6 opportunity and the support that the
7 community brings forward that can make a
8 difference. And thank you for that
9 testimony. Thank you for --

10 MR. ZEIGLER: Yes, sir.

11 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: --
12 informing us of the importance of
13 certified peer specialists. So thank you
14 very much --

15 MR. ZEIGLER: Thank you,
16 Councilman.

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: -- for
18 sharing your life story with us.

19 We will now ask Jeff Draine, a
20 Professor and Chair of the Social Work
21 Department at Temple University, to come
22 forward.

23 Doctor, could you please state
24 your name for the record and proceed with
25 your testimony when you're ready.

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2 (Witness approached witness
3 table.)

4 DR. DRAINE: My name is Jeffrey
5 Draine. I am Chair of the School of
6 Social Work at Temple University, and
7 thank you for the opportunity to come
8 here, Councilmember O'Brien and other
9 Councilmembers. I think it's probably --
10 maybe it's part of the ritual to begin
11 with a Lucien Blackwell anecdote. My
12 first week living here in Philadelphia in
13 1989, I remember it was in the midst of a
14 mayoral campaign, and that's when I first
15 saw Lucien Blackwell leading what
16 amounted to a parade as part of his
17 campaign, and that memory is still in my
18 head as my introduction to Philadelphia.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you.

21 DR. DRAINE: It made me happy
22 to be here that something like that would
23 happen.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you.

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2 DR. DRAINE: I would like also
3 to thank Mr. Zeigler for his words this
4 morning. I would say that as someone who
5 is a researcher, has been working for 25
6 years on the issue of mental illness in
7 the criminal justice system, that any
8 source or information that I provide is
9 secondary to the primary source, which is
10 the lived experiences of people who have
11 experiences similar to Mr. Zeigler. So I
12 just want to make sure that that's how I
13 prioritize the sources of information I
14 have.

15 Let me begin with a bit of an
16 anecdote and then some content.

17 My interest again during my
18 earlier days, interest in this area, was
19 as a full-time volunteer for a religious
20 community working to address homelessness
21 in my hometown of Richmond, Virginia.
22 The state prison, which is now
23 demolished, sat across the street from
24 the place where we worked, and the men --
25 it was a men's prison -- would use our

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2 street address, 308 West Canal, as their
3 discharge address and would walk across
4 the interstate bridge and into our front
5 door. The one time I've ever been
6 physically hit in this business was when
7 one of those men walked through the front
8 door and had to hit someone to vent his
9 anger over lost time to prison. True to
10 our way at the time, we logically made
11 him our cook and a role that he filled
12 for years following.

13 We had built a coalition in
14 Richmond that provided physical comforts,
15 mental healthcare, and advocacy for the
16 welfare of people who came to us. We
17 were not naive about our guests. Many
18 were tough characters, hardened by life
19 on the street. A third to a half of
20 those who came through our doors were
21 living with serious mental illness. We
22 gave them things to do and things to aim
23 for - school, jobs, and relationships.
24 And I begin with this anecdote to paint
25 for you the perspective I have on this

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2 issue that is treated too often as a
3 clinical issue. It is first and foremost
4 an issue of human dignity.

5 I now want to focus on some of
6 the terms that people use around this,
7 all which happen to start with R-E. It
8 just happens to be the way things are
9 named around here.

10 First I want to talk about the
11 term "rehabilitation." And we talk about
12 rehabilitation in the context of mental
13 illness in one way and we talk about
14 rehabilitation in the context of the
15 justice system often in another way. My
16 understanding of the term
17 "rehabilitation" from my training and my
18 experience is that it is preparation and
19 accommodating for a person to live a full
20 life in the community. And in my years
21 of experience going in and out of jails
22 and prisons and working and talking to
23 people, that it is very difficult to
24 achieve that inside jail or prison,
25 because it's an unnatural environment.

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2 It's an unnatural way for people to
3 associate with one another.

4 The preparation for living a
5 life comes from living a life in the
6 community where you're going to live and
7 have relationships and fully integrated
8 in that community. So whatever services
9 or treatments or helps that are provided
10 inside that are called rehabilitation
11 should be things that also continue and
12 accommodate care and support for people
13 on the outside, just like anyone else, to
14 the fullest extent possible.

15 Removal is the second word.
16 Todd Clear is a visionary criminologist
17 who works at Rutgers University-Newark,
18 and he insists instead of calling this
19 issue reentry, he calls it removal. And
20 it is an interesting term of a phrase,
21 because he says that's the real issue,
22 and I see it that way too ever since I
23 heard him frame it this way, because the
24 issue is that people have been removed
25 from their communities. People have been

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2 removed from their family, and their
3 family members have been removed from one
4 another. And it's a fissure in families
5 and it's a fissure in neighborhoods,
6 especially in neighborhoods where there
7 is a greater likelihood that a
8 significant number of people who may be
9 parents are removed from those
10 neighborhoods, which not only affects the
11 fabric of families, but affects the
12 fabric of whole communities. And I think
13 if we don't see this as a removal issue
14 that affects all levels of a community
15 and a person's life, that we're missing
16 something.

17 The next word I have is the one
18 that we are using most often, which is
19 reentry. Reentry is really a vaguely
20 defined term. It's actually a very vague
21 phrase. Those of us that do reentry
22 work, we use it all the time and we
23 assume, first of all, that we're all
24 meaning the same thing. When I talk to
25 people outside the field, the specific

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2 field of criminal justice or reentry, one
3 of the most common questions I get when I
4 say reentry, they say, Reentry to what?
5 And I say, Well, that's a really good
6 question. That's also the question we
7 ask when we ask about diversion.

8 Diversion to what? Where are we
9 diverting? What are people reentering?
10 And when we talk about reentry, we need
11 to talk about once again that end of the
12 equation, which is often really more
13 important than the equation of what are
14 the mechanics of how someone is released
15 from jail or prison.

16 One of the things that I --
17 concerns I have about reentry programs
18 is -- the concern I have is whether or
19 not they are scaled up to an extent, that
20 they not only are big enough in their
21 vision to have an impact on individuals'
22 lives and also if they're big enough in
23 their scale to really be able to provide
24 those kind of services to everyone who is
25 affected. So I've been thinking about

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2 the capacity of these programs to
3 actually provide comprehensive support
4 and services that are most affected is an
5 ongoing issue, and I don't think we
6 realize how big that may be. I think we
7 need to make decisions about the
8 resources that we're going to devote to
9 this.

10 I think one of the ways to do
11 this, to talk about impact, is -- the
12 other R-E word I'm going to introduce is
13 restoration, to think more about
14 restoring people to communities. If we
15 think of it instead as reentry, but what
16 do we do if we want to really restore
17 someone to the communities? What does
18 that look like that's different than if
19 we just think about someone leaving jail
20 or prison, which is a traumatic
21 experience, as expressed to me by a lot
22 of people, that one day -- actually,
23 let's say one moment you're on one side
24 of the door. This is an expression I
25 hear quite often. And you're thinking

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2 everything is going to go right this
3 time, and then you step outside the door
4 and often the first thought is, Oh --
5 enter your favorite expletive -- what am
6 I going to do now. And the services that
7 meet you there are really what meets
8 that. But too often that's the biggest
9 step people take and the biggest gap
10 there is in our services.

11 We need to aim for -- I call
12 this, we need to aim further down the
13 road than just reentry. We need to aim
14 further down the road than just focusing
15 on recidivism. If we just focus on
16 recidivism, the only expectation we're
17 having for people is that they stay out
18 of jail. We need to focus on how people
19 are restored to community.

20 I think there's an approach
21 that is largely untapped on this issue
22 with people with mental illnesses that
23 are leaving jails and prisons, and, that
24 is, the use of evidence-based practices
25 from psychiatric rehab for people to be

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2 able to return to communities with the
3 supports they need in housing, in work,
4 in schools like anybody else.

5 Evidence-based practices such as
6 supported employment, integrated drug
7 dual diagnosis treatment, self-advocacy,
8 and those treatment services and rehab
9 services have practice histories and
10 evidence for their effectiveness, to
11 relative degrees. We're still learning
12 about all these practices in the mental
13 health community. And they're not
14 implemented enough on the outside, in the
15 general community outside that, but it
16 would definitely be an advantage to be
17 using these intervention models
18 specifically for these populations,
19 because they target the specific things
20 that are the main impediments to staying
21 in the community for a longer period of
22 time. Because even among a population of
23 people with mental illness, the main
24 impediment is not the mental illness.
25 The main impediment is the lack of

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2 education and the lack of employment and
3 the lack of housing. Those are the
4 things that trip people up, not the
5 mental illness, and there's data to show
6 that.

7 I've been preaching this, and
8 my colleague Mark Salzer is behind me
9 somewhere, and, you know, we've been
10 writing about this since 2002, that the
11 issue with this population is not the
12 mental illness. It's the policies that
13 surround the criminal justice system,
14 including policies around incarceration,
15 including policies like probation and
16 parole.

17 You know, a lot of the things
18 that we suggest, for instance, around
19 probation and parole, around some of the
20 things that Mr. Zeigler mentioned that
21 inhibit the ability to get a job, that
22 inhibit the ability to participate, we
23 propose this, and the response we get
24 generally is along the lines of, Well,
25 why are you going easy on people who have

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2 done crimes, who have committed
3 aggravated assault crimes, who have
4 robbed people? Why are you going easy on
5 them?

6 I see it completely
7 differently. It's not whether or not
8 we're hard on people or easy on people.
9 This criminal justice system in the U.S.
10 is hard on everybody, trust me. My
11 question is, what is your aim? Is your
12 aim to punish or is your aim for these
13 people to return to the community with
14 the supports they need? What looks easy
15 to you or someone else, to me looks like
16 the best way to solve this problem. And
17 I'll end my comments there and take any
18 questions you have.

19 I also have written down the
20 questions that you -- the homework we had
21 all along the way.

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.
23 I was remiss in not inviting Sandy Vasko,
24 who is the Director of the Office of
25 Mental Health, Department of Behavioral

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2 Health and Intellectual disAbility

3 Services, to come forward and join the

4 panel. Would you please come up at this

5 time.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: While
7 she's coming, let me say thank you too.
8 So thank you for your kind remarks and
9 your memories.

10 DR. DRAINE: Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you. About Lucien Blackwell. Thank you.

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 DR. DRAINE: Sandy Vasko will
16 correct anything I said that was wrong.

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Ms. Vasko,
18 you can identify yourself for the record
19 and proceed with your testimony.

20 MS. VASKO: Good morning,
21 Chairman O'Brien and Chairman Jones. My
22 name is Sandy Vasko. I'm the Director of
23 Mental Health for the Department of
24 Behavioral Health and Intellectual
25 disAbility Services.

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2 I'm appearing on behalf of
3 Arthur E. Evans, the Commissioner of the
4 Department of Behavioral Health, and
5 Dr. H.J. Wright, who is the Director of
6 our Behavioral Health and Justice Related
7 Services. Unfortunately, Dr. Wright was
8 unable to be here today and he asked me
9 to represent his comments to you today.

10 Individuals reentering society
11 from custody who suffer with a serious
12 mental illness, or what we refer to as
13 SMI, have formidable challenges, as you
14 just heard from Dr. Draine. Individuals
15 diagnosed with an SMI such as
16 schizophrenia or, as Mr. Zeigler
17 identified earlier, bipolar disorder,
18 major depression disorders, psychotic
19 disorders suffer from impaired mental,
20 emotional, and behavioral functioning to
21 the extent that they require supportive
22 treatment services if they are to
23 successfully remain functioning to the
24 extent that they require supportive
25 treatment services and functioning in the

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2 community.

3 The national average for
4 incarcerated individuals diagnosed with
5 an SMI is 9 to 18 percent. Recent data
6 from the Philadelphia Prison System is on
7 the lower end of this estimate. As of
8 January 2015, the PPS census had an
9 average daily population of about 8,150.
10 Nine hundred and fifty-nine of those
11 individuals, only about 11.8 percent, had
12 been diagnosed with an SMI.

13 Additionally, it was noted that between
14 30 to 40 percent -- I believe someone had
15 asked that question -- of incarcerated
16 individuals have received behavioral
17 health services. In total, according to
18 PPS admission release data, the yearly
19 average is about 37,000 admissions,
20 33,000 unduplicated individuals. Of
21 those, SMI admissions at PPS average
22 about 4,200 a year, or 81 per week.

23 Individuals released from the
24 Philadelphia Prison System with an SMI
25 average about 12 per day, or 84 per week.

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2 For individuals diagnosed with
3 an SMI, emphasis must be placed on
4 substance use, dependence, and mental
5 health treatment. Those individuals with
6 co-occurring behavioral health challenges
7 are four times more likely to violate
8 parole and/or return to jail within the
9 first year after reentry than persons
10 with no SMI or substance use dependence
11 history.

12 Given the significant number of
13 people with SMI reentering the community
14 every week, the challenge to remove the
15 barriers that impede successful reentry
16 require collaborative efforts basically
17 involving City agencies that serve in
18 this role. Collaborative across
19 disciplines and jurisdictional boundaries
20 is at the core of jail reentry. Recent
21 years have seen a national explosion of
22 creative and productive partnerships
23 among jails and law enforcement,
24 probation and parole, faith-based
25 organizations, mental health clinics,

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2 victim advocacy groups, the business
3 community, and a variety of other social
4 service and community providers.

5 Fortunately, in Philadelphia
6 we've had quite a bit of cross-systems
7 collaboration among justice partners and
8 the behavioral health system. We've had
9 much in the past approximately ten years.
10 The behavioral health system actively
11 participates on the Criminal Justice
12 Advisory Board and meets regularly with
13 the courts, Philadelphia Prison System,
14 District Attorney's Office, Philadelphia
15 Defender's Association, and Probation and
16 Parole, focusing on implementing the
17 evidence-based practices for planning and
18 implementation of reentry strategies.

19 Two current behavioral partnerships or
20 initiatives specifically address reentry
21 while the third example that I will
22 reference for you addresses both
23 diversion and reentry.

24 The first initiative that we
25 are involved in has been -- DBH has been

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2 an active participant in the First
3 Judicial District Mental Health Court
4 since its inception in about 2009. This
5 is the first reentry mental health court
6 in Pennsylvania in which sentenced
7 individuals who are diagnosed with an SMI
8 are released from custody into the
9 community to court-ordered housing,
10 treatment, case management, and other
11 support services. The DBH is currently
12 working with the First Judicial District
13 Mental Health Court through a U.S.
14 Department of Justice Office of Justice
15 Programs grant to provide comprehensive
16 assessments for placement and services
17 behind the walls. The scope of this
18 grant is to implement a comprehensive
19 assessment which encompasses the clinical
20 needs of the court participant and
21 addresses the risk of re-offending. This
22 grant has just been awarded as of October
23 '14 and we will have the benefit of that
24 for the next two years.

25 The second initiative that we

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2 are working with is the Philadelphia's
3 Veterans Court through two Substance
4 Abuse and Mental Health Service
5 Administration grants, one of which we
6 will focus on in this testimony. The
7 four-year grant project diverts U.S.
8 military veterans with trauma-related
9 disorders from the criminal justice
10 system and incarceration in local jails
11 to programs that address their behavioral
12 health and recovery needs. The veterans
13 diverted from the criminal justice system
14 receive trauma-specific treatment and
15 support services within a trauma-informed
16 integrated services system. This
17 project's goal is to facilitate the
18 healing process for men and women who
19 have suffered from the acute stress and
20 trauma of war and to assist them with
21 reintegration into the community. This
22 project is a pilot here in Philadelphia.
23 We share the project with Allegheny
24 County, and the hope is that this will be
25 replicated across the Commonwealth.

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2 And then the third, I'd like to
3 reference the work of our Office of
4 Addiction Services Department, which has
5 been effective for the past 22 years.
6 They have worked in partnership with
7 criminal justice agencies, including the
8 First Judicial District, Court of Common
9 Plea, Municipal Court, Adult Probation
10 and Parole, and Pretrial Services, the
11 District Attorney's Office, the
12 Defender's Association, the Philadelphia
13 Prison System, and 70 addiction treatment
14 programs to develop a network of justice
15 behavioral health projects. These
16 projects work to either divert
17 non-violent substance abusers from jail
18 as well as promote community reentry
19 activities to link inmates to services
20 when they return to the community.

21 Some of the initiatives that
22 they outline and include are the Forensic
23 Intensive Recovery Program, or otherwise
24 known as FIR; Drug and Alcohol
25 Restrictive Intermediate Punishment

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2 Program, the IPP program; Philadelphia
3 Treatment Court; the Driving Under the
4 Influence, or DUI, Court; Accelerated
5 Misdemeanor Program, or the AMP Program;
6 Domestic Violence Court; Dawn Court;
7 Family Court Adult Evaluation; Juvenile
8 Treatment Court; and Youth Violence
9 Reduction Program.

10 During Fiscal Year 2014, a
11 total of 7,000 individuals were served by
12 these initiatives. The problem-solving
13 courts that I mentioned such as
14 Treatment, DUI, Domestic Violence are all
15 programs designed to divert or prevent
16 individuals from entering the
17 Philadelphia Prison System. FIR and
18 Intermediate Punishment programs are
19 early release or parole programs that
20 offer reentry support and alternatives to
21 local incarceration. Approximately 3,200
22 individuals are in licensed treatment
23 programs in lieu of incarceration
24 annually.

25 This is by no means an

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2 exhaustive list of collaborative efforts
3 between justice partners and behavioral
4 health to mitigate the effect of risk
5 factors and promote protective factors
6 for returning citizens with SMI and
7 co-occurring challenges. Successful
8 reentry is a shared challenge. We
9 believe it requires creative shared
10 collaborative solutions. Needless to
11 say, we have much work ahead of us.

12 I appreciate the opportunity to
13 speak with you and to offer this
14 testimony here today.

15 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
16 both for your testimony. Chairman Jones
17 has a question. I'm going to ask one
18 question first of Dr. Draine. You use a
19 lot of words that begin with R-E, and I'd
20 like you just, because there were so
21 many -- and I'll just mention a few --
22 rehabilitation, removal, reentry,
23 restoration, and you talked about the
24 evidence-based practices, including, but
25 not limited to, housing, education,

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2 employment. Can you please again just
3 summarize how that affects another R
4 word, recidivism.

5 DR. DRAINE: Yes. That's the
6 other R-E word.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Just pull
8 it a little closer, because the
9 stenographer and others have trouble
10 hearing.

11 DR. DRAINE: Okay. The impact
12 on recidivism is -- the evidence for that
13 is mixed, largely because I think a lot
14 of the interventions that have been tried
15 have focused more on the treatment access
16 side of the intervention and not address
17 also the other aspects as thoroughly.

18 The evidence that there is --
19 for instance, we have some conversation
20 here about problem-solving courts and
21 mental health courts.

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'm glad
23 you picked up on that because I heard
24 that in your original testimony.

25 DR. DRAINE: Yes. The one

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2 trial that shows significant effect in
3 this was for mental health courts, with
4 some strength to the effects, was one
5 that also offered housing. Others tend
6 to not have as effective of an outcome.
7 So those basic support services seem to
8 be key to reducing recidivism.

9 In terms of special
10 problem-solving courts generally, one of
11 the issues in the evidence is, it's
12 difficult -- it's one of these things
13 that looks really easy initially but
14 actually gets really complicated real
15 fast, because you have the number -- you
16 have to closely examine who is coming
17 into mental health courts and how. So
18 the whole population might come into
19 mental health courts. The process --
20 depending on the process -- and there's a
21 lot of variability depending on what
22 courts they're in. The process of how
23 someone graduates through that process or
24 makes it all the way through the Mental
25 Health Court program, a lot of people

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2 fall off either by being asked to leave
3 or being told that they haven't met
4 requirements or by dropping out. And it
5 depends on where the evidence is
6 collected, whether it's collected
7 following the whole population in or it's
8 just the people who have stayed in the
9 program long enough to have data
10 collected about them.

11 I have to say, I don't have
12 specific information about the Mental --
13 data on the Mental Health Court here in
14 Philadelphia. Like most researchers, I'm
15 most naive about my hometown.

16 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: That's
17 interesting. We have some of the most
18 enlightened and forward-looking
19 epidemiologists in the country right
20 here, and perhaps we can take another
21 closer look at that data.

22 I'm going to recognize Chairman
23 Jones for a question and then I'll have
24 some other questions for you, if you
25 don't mind.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
3 much for your testimony. It is
4 enlightening from both of you. A couple
5 of questions, and feel free to answer any
6 of the other ones that I've asked before,
7 but one that is intriguing to me is that
8 you mentioned the population that has
9 been diagnosed as having some type of
10 mental illness, a range of about 9, I
11 believe it was, to 12 percent?

12 MS. VASKO: Nine to 18 percent.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Nine to 18
14 percent. When Mr. Zeigler testified, in
15 his non-clinical diagnosis, walking those
16 tiers, he said it was more like 75
17 percent had some type of visible,
18 recognizable issue. Why do you think the
19 disparity is so great between the two
20 observations and diagnosis?

21 Pull that mike to you, though.

22 DR. DRAINE: So I think there
23 are a number of reasons for that. One is
24 depending on how you are assessing mental
25 illness or observing mental illness. If

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2 you are observing mental illness in the
3 general environment where there is a lot
4 of -- there's a fair amount of mental
5 illness to begin with and also a fair
6 amount of trauma and people responding to
7 different experiences, you might observe
8 a higher number than is usual in the
9 general population.

10 Also, this is a tricky thing to
11 measure, to actually look at what you're
12 talking about. A lot of people can come
13 in to jail or prison with mental illness,
14 but not having been diagnosed. People
15 can be misdiagnosed. So all those issues
16 come into play in terms of the error that
17 comes in to making these kind of
18 estimates.

19 There also -- there's using
20 diagnoses that are in charts in jails and
21 prisons and there are other ways in which
22 researchers use research-based diagnosis,
23 which are standardized instruments they
24 use. And the most reliable numbers for
25 jails in particular -- and this would be

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2 most relevant to your purview in
3 Philadelphia jails as opposed to
4 prisons -- is using these reliable
5 instruments for people coming into jail
6 systems. It's about 7 percent of men and
7 about 15 percent of women show signs of
8 having serious mental illness coming into
9 jails.

10 Now, that also is problematic
11 because there may be -- and there's some
12 speculation from me here based on
13 experience and based on the fact that I
14 have spent a fair number of years
15 actually administering these standardized
16 instruments. There may be some bias to
17 the differences in how men and women
18 respond to it. I think men are less
19 likely to admit to depression, for
20 example, in the same way than women do,
21 and that's just an observation that may
22 explain it, or it may be actually true
23 that it's about twice as many women as
24 men.

25 But those are the numbers that

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2 we have with the most reliable, valid
3 procedures and methods coming into jails,
4 and that was done in New York. We do
5 have similar numbers from data that we
6 used in Philadelphia around 11 or 12,
7 which is very close to the numbers that
8 Ms. Vasko provided, and we didn't even
9 talk ahead of the meeting. And what's
10 interesting about those data and is a
11 project in which we followed people who
12 left Philadelphia jails and would explain
13 whether or not people came back into
14 jails and that the individuals that were
15 more likely to recidivate, which was
16 consistent with evidence at large, is
17 that people with substance use disorders,
18 with co-occurring substance use.

19 But what was really interesting
20 about the data we had was, we saw little
21 to no effect for uncomplicated mental
22 illness. And even -- and this may get
23 into like some peculiarities about
24 analyzing data. Even in some cases,
25 depending on how you analyze the data, it

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2 looked as if mental illness could even be
3 a factor that keeps you out of jail,
4 uncomplicated mental illness. And my
5 read of that about the mental health
6 system generally is a competent and
7 capable mental health system is probably
8 pretty good, like the one in
9 Philadelphia, is probably pretty good at
10 treating uncomplicated mental illness and
11 addressing it in a way that keeps someone
12 out of jail. It's the co-occurring
13 substance use that's difficult and
14 challenging, not just as a clinician to
15 know how to treat it, but to have a
16 sufficient number of providers that are
17 trained in -- that are thoroughly trained
18 in doing co-occurring treatment, that
19 treating both mental illness and
20 substance use, and the resources to back
21 it up.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: So if I
23 understood what you said to me, you said
24 that people in that diagnosed population,
25 9 to 18 percent, sometimes have a greater

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2 chance of not coming back than the
3 regular general population?

4 DR. DRAINE: I think -- let me
5 just word it this way. This is probably
6 the most valid way I can say it, is that
7 the factor that is the largest
8 contributor to recidivism and to entry
9 into jails from general populations in
10 prisons is substance use, co-occurring
11 substance use with the mental illness.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
13 I stand corrected.

14 The other question I have is,
15 during the '80s, late '90s, there were a
16 number of standard institutions that were
17 closed.

18 DR. DRAINE: Yes.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: What impact
20 did that have on the prison system?

21 DR. DRAINE: So that is a very
22 complicated question for a number of
23 reasons, and that's actually the issue
24 that I've written about to some extent,
25 because of the extent to which people

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2 make the direct connection from the
3 closing of large custodial psychiatric
4 institutions and the increasing number of
5 people with mental illnesses in the
6 criminal justice system. The reason it's
7 complicated is that during that time
8 period was also the time period where the
9 war on drugs began in earnest around
10 about 1973, '74 when sentencing standards
11 were changed to be much more tougher on
12 drugs. People were sentenced more
13 certainly for drug crimes and for longer
14 periods of time, and that sort of
15 collects more and more people into jails
16 and prisons and keeps them there for
17 longer periods of time. So that's part
18 of what explains that.

19 Also, it was the baby boom
20 aging into the early 20's, which is the
21 usual age frame when people have first
22 break of most of the illnesses that we're
23 talking about here. So the population of
24 people that were at risk for mental
25 illness was growing. The population of

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2 people getting arrested for drug crimes
3 was growing. It's just one of those
4 perfect storm things. You can't
5 attribute it solely to psychiatric
6 hospitals closing.

7 In fact, I think there's some
8 evidence, some historians of mental
9 illness claim that psychiatric hospitals
10 closed largely because state officials,
11 not to blame everything on elected
12 officials, but state officials became
13 very wary of being able to pay for large
14 custodial institutions that were just
15 going to get larger and larger. And
16 that's part of the history of large
17 custodial institutions. That also
18 applies to past institutions such as
19 almshouses and orphanages.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Conversely,
21 out of -- and this is my last question,
22 Mr. Chairman.

23 Out of that 9 to 18 percent of
24 the population that you diagnose coming
25 in the door as having some type of issue,

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2 what is the percentage of that same
3 population coming out with an improved
4 circumstance mentally?

5 DR. DRAINE: That's a very good
6 question, and I'm not going to be able to
7 answer it probably to your satisfaction.
8 But I will say that I think the way to
9 answer it is examining the role of
10 different interventions and different
11 models of providing support services as
12 people leave jails and prisons. You
13 know, for instance, right now we've just
14 completed data collection of a large
15 study of critical time intervention as a
16 method -- as a potential method for
17 keeping people with mental illnesses who
18 leave prison -- and this was specifically
19 prison -- from returning. And we're just
20 analyzing the data now, so I can't tell
21 you anything definitive from that right
22 now. It does appear that people are more
23 likely to be engaged with providers, but
24 that doesn't mean that following from
25 that that less return to the justice

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2 system.

3 I think the answer is more and
4 more people taking time -- I mean, the
5 way we get break-throughs in science
6 around issues such as this or anything is
7 by trying any plausible idea that could
8 possibly help. And, for instance,
9 criminal time intervention. My idea was
10 that this was an intervention that had a
11 strong evidence base for helping people
12 stay out of homeless shelters. There's
13 actually a very strong evidence base for
14 that. It could apply to people leaving
15 jails and prisons, and we're hoping that
16 that's true.

17 Housing does seem to be the
18 key. I keep harping that point because
19 that's actually where we have strong
20 evidence. We have strong evidence from
21 Lamberti in New York. We have strong
22 evidence from mental health courts in
23 California and in other locations that --
24 and from the evidence we have generally
25 on the strength of supported housing as

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2 the key element to people's recovery
3 generally, is definitely key to improved
4 health and improving all the factors that
5 contribute to recidivism.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: So going
7 forward, I would encourage all here to
8 understand that whether you come here to
9 save souls or to save dollars, you have
10 to measure what good costs, and that's
11 something that we've been faced with in
12 our budgeting process, that everything
13 costs money and we need to know that is
14 this ounce of prevention costing us or
15 saving us a pound of cure.

16 DR. DRAINE: Yes.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: So where to
18 apply limited resources will depend on
19 should we build another institution that
20 segregates that population out to give
21 them a better outcome. Should we
22 incorporate these treatment processes
23 within existing institutions, and which
24 one of those are more cost effective and
25 which ones of those are more efficient in

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2 improving outcomes.

3 DR. DRAINE: We do have
4 evidence that it is more cost effective
5 to provide support services to people in
6 their own homes. It is more effective to
7 actually pay for that housing and provide
8 support to people in their own homes than
9 to use traditional institutional-based
10 treatment. Dennis Culhane at University
11 of Pennsylvania, my colleague at the
12 University of Pennsylvania, has done
13 extensive work on this, run the data
14 through New York City, New York, New York
15 study, and it's conclusive evidence that
16 supported services in people's own homes,
17 even to the extent of actually providing
18 the housing, is more cost effective to
19 society, not just to the one provider or
20 one set of providers, but to society,
21 because hospital emergency room use,
22 homeless shelter use, hospital use is all
23 reduced by the fact that people have a
24 stable place to live.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,

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2 Chairman O'Brien.

3 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.

4 I would just like to expand on
5 the recommendation that my colleague
6 Chairman Jones just made, and I think
7 you're very supportive of it. We have to
8 commit to a new way of policymaking, and
9 that's reflective in the outcomes-based
10 requirements that the federal government
11 is now insisting upon. But, again, I
12 would reiterate that we have
13 epidemiologists here that are leading the
14 way, and they drill down inside the data
15 and it points to new directions and in
16 supporting those outcomes, because we
17 take -- they take the data, they strip it
18 of its bias, and when they drill down
19 inside, it projects a new direction that
20 we would never have been aware of before.

21 So committing to that new type
22 of process is something that I think
23 would reenergize the effective use of our
24 resources, and then this whether we
25 should tax. Once we are aware of that

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2 kind of evidence, we have a
3 responsibility to act.

4 But, again, I would just like
5 to talk to Ms. Vasko. You mentioned the
6 Forensic Intensive Recovery, the FIR,
7 Program. We hoped that we would have
8 somebody here today from that program
9 given the important work that they do.
10 We know that they deal mostly with
11 individuals coming out of jails that have
12 substance abuse issues. My question is,
13 does the FIR program and the other
14 addiction initiative that you mentioned
15 address the needs of those who are duly
16 diagnosed? Because my understanding is
17 that the mental health diagnosis can
18 sometimes exclude these individuals from
19 those programs, and, if so, what can we
20 do with co-occurring mental health and
21 substance abuse issues for individuals
22 that are eligible to participate in so
23 they take full advantage of these
24 programs?

25 MS. VASKO: First, I'd like to

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2 say that Laurie Corbin is in the audience
3 and she is the Forensic Intensive Service
4 Program Director. So if there are any
5 questions, I'm sure that Laurie would be
6 willing to comment.

7 But just to speak to the
8 co-occurring, I think one of the things
9 that is happening within the Department
10 currently is that there is an increased
11 effort to have more collaborative
12 discussions between the Office of Mental
13 Health and the Office of Addiction
14 Services, because we clearly are
15 realizing planning for services sort of
16 in a siloed approach is no longer meeting
17 the needs of the majority of the
18 individuals that are coming through the
19 system.

20 We've recently piloted some
21 case management efforts around providing
22 supports and services, access to
23 services, from a co-occurring approach,
24 and we have found that at least to date
25 that it has been effective with the small

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2 population that we have piloted it with.
3 We're hoping that as we expand our look
4 into how to create more co-occurring
5 access, that we will be able to tackle
6 that issue. Unfortunately, I don't
7 believe we have done enough of it, but
8 the fact that we are in the process now
9 of talking and planning from that
10 perspective, hopefully we will be able to
11 address that issue.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I just
13 think it's a really challenging issue for
14 my individuals with disabilities for
15 many, many years who we chemically
16 restrained them instead of providing the
17 behavioral analysis that was necessary to
18 identify the underlying treatment issues
19 that were required.

20 I also would like to redirect a
21 question to you, Doctor, and there's a
22 second part to it. First, if you can
23 identify some of the creative initiatives
24 that I think are housed at Temple that we
25 can build partnerships with the City.

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2 But specifically given that question and
3 also with my guys with autism and other
4 disabilities, I think it's critical that
5 we use our schools of pharmacology to
6 identify this integration and look at how
7 to properly use those drugs specifically
8 for a diagnosis and also the interaction
9 of those drugs. And I know in our
10 programs for autism, we have limited it
11 to a certain number of medications,
12 because beyond that no one can predict
13 what the interactions of those chemicals
14 may have.

15 But if you can just speak to
16 the collaborations that could be enhanced
17 between Temple University and this
18 conversation.

19 DR. DRAINE: Surrounding
20 individuals on --

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Well, two
22 issues - the best practices, the
23 evidence-based practices that you were
24 testifying to before, and also perhaps
25 some of the issues around the dual

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2 diagnosis issue.

3 DR. DRAINE: So we have a
4 center, the TU Collaborative, on
5 inclusion of people with psychiatric
6 disabilities, and that center is devoted
7 to knowledge development and distribution
8 on evidence-based practices and
9 implementing and testing interventions,
10 particularly around some of the outcomes
11 I mentioned around use of supported
12 housing, supported employment, supported
13 education, and that's a strong
14 collaboration we have with the Department
15 of Behavioral Health and with other
16 agencies within the City as well and
17 across -- collaboration with other
18 universities as well, and all those
19 resources are available for collaboration
20 with our colleagues at the City.

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.

22 Councilman Oh.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
24 much.

25 So I'll have some questions

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2 just for my curiosity's sake. I'm
3 curious, what is the difference between
4 serious mental illness and mental illness
5 in terms of this topic? Because from
6 what I'm reading on the mission
7 statement, 6 percent of the population
8 has serious mental illness. Once you get
9 in the prison population, it rises. So
10 the difference between serious mental
11 illness and mental illness when it comes
12 to our discussion today.

13 DR. DRAINE: Broadly defined --
14 and I say that because if we get three
15 mental health experts together, we'll
16 have five opinions. But there would be
17 reasonable agreement to a diagnosis that
18 is in the serious diagnostic categories
19 of schizophrenia or serious emotional
20 disorder such as bipolar disorder or
21 major depression, and that would be
22 agreement on those in particular. And
23 other people may add other disorders as
24 well such as trauma-based disorders and
25 things, depending on how the people's

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2 perception of those is serious or not may
3 develop.

4 Actually, what's more important
5 in terms of defining something as serious
6 mental illness is looking at the extent
7 to which the disorder is debilitating or
8 actually inhibiting a person from leading
9 a life that is included with everyone
10 else in their day-to-day life, the extent
11 to which is actually inhibited in their
12 participation of day-to-day life. That's
13 actually more important in defining
14 something as serious mental illness.

15 Unfortunately, it's easier just
16 to use a diagnosis as a shorthand because
17 that's easier -- often easier to access
18 and often that's -- I know the City
19 respects the fact that functioning is
20 also included with diagnosis in terms of
21 defining serious mental illness. So
22 that's the definition of that category.

23 People will use the frame --
24 the term "mental illness" which will
25 refer to anything -- can refer to any

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2 emotional or psychosocial problem that
3 someone is having that is disordered in
4 some way. So that's a much broader
5 category.

6 MS. VASKO: And I think you
7 have to take in to consider the acuity
8 level. Unfortunately, sometimes from a
9 federal and a state perspective, they
10 define -- they are very prescriptive
11 about what falls in certain categories.
12 We tend in the Department to push the
13 parameters a little further and tend to
14 go with something more on the acuity or
15 the level of impairment that it has in a
16 person's life.

17 So while -- for example, one of
18 the diagnoses that often straddles the
19 mind is borderline personality disorder.
20 Not necessarily recognized as a serious
21 mental illness; however, has severe
22 impact on an individual's -- often on a
23 person's functioning level, ability to
24 interact with others in a socially
25 appropriate manner, and oftentimes has

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2 much more of an impact in terms of a
3 person's success coming out of jail,
4 integrating back into the community,
5 successfully living and managing their
6 apartment, but yet would fall more in the
7 category of just a mental illness
8 categorization when you look at it from a
9 state perspective.

10 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. So for
11 the purposes of providing a better mental
12 healthcare system for those that are
13 incarcerated and those who leave
14 incarceration, I understand that there is
15 a serious mental illness that has a kind
16 of a definition that we would consider
17 kind of grossly abnormal to the
18 functioning capabilities of the society.
19 You are identifying mental illness as a
20 general term that many people may have,
21 and somewhere in the middle is this
22 mental illness that is debilitating in
23 having a full life's enjoyment type of
24 thing. Is that correct?

25 DR. DRAINE: So I think that,

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2 yes, part of the mental illness is the
3 diagnosis, the acuity level, how serious
4 the illness is, as well as the impact it
5 has on someone's functioning. I would
6 hasten to point out that in terms of the
7 implications for jail and prison
8 services, that the jail is responsible
9 for treatment of any mental illness, not
10 just serious mental illness. They're
11 actually constitutionally obligated to
12 provide effective treatment from mental
13 illness, from the most serious mental
14 illness to -- probably from my
15 experience -- and it's been a long time
16 since I've actually seen the data from
17 the prisons, but I can imagine it's still
18 true. The most common diagnosis is
19 adjustment disorder, and largely from
20 people -- or major depression and
21 depression, which could be -- is
22 exacerbated by coming into jail.

23 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay.

24 DR. DRAINE: And that needs to
25 be treated as well. Even if you see like

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2 an adjustment disorder in jail, it's
3 still mental illness. It's still --
4 because that's the nature of mental
5 illness, is the interaction with
6 stressors.

7 MS. VASKO: And I think that's
8 the other piece that I think you heard
9 Mr. Zeigler speak so well to, which is
10 we've yet to truly understand the
11 influence and the involvement of trauma
12 as well that is often, quote/unquote,
13 undiagnosed, but is very, very prevalent
14 in many of the inmates and has a
15 significant impact in functioning level
16 and does exacerbate conditions. So an
17 individual could go into prison not
18 diagnosed, maybe never accessing
19 behavioral health services, and with the
20 onset of that traumatic experience could
21 trigger and then it becomes evident
22 whether it's exhibited in behaviors or
23 some level of symptom that hopefully
24 someone in the prison system is going to
25 take note of, connect with our Mental

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2 Health Unit in the prison and get
3 treatment for the individual.

4 COUNCILMAN OH: Well, I
5 certainly agree with that and all that's
6 in that statement about we should and do
7 treat any mental illness and should
8 provide those services. The reason I'm
9 asking is because of the use data,
10 rehabilitation, reentry, restoration, and
11 it would seem to me that trauma is very
12 broad. In other words, there's the
13 trauma of being incarcerated. There's
14 the trauma of having raped someone or
15 murdered someone or broken in their
16 house. There's the trauma of having been
17 burglarized or assaulted or raped or had
18 your child killed. So you have a
19 population that's traumatized. And then
20 you have those who got caught and those
21 who didn't get caught who do the same
22 thing, live in the same neighborhood.
23 And so you're doing a reentry,
24 restoration in an environment or a
25 circumstance typically where the person

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2 is leaving a place where that is a
3 condition of the environment and
4 reentering that location.

5 I would say that I don't
6 know -- are we still using the McNaughton
7 rule? Do we have a DA in the room? Yes,
8 still McNaughton.

9 So the McNaughton rule is that
10 regardless of mental illness, you are a
11 criminal if convicted not because you're
12 mentally ill, but because you evidenced
13 your ability to recognize that what you
14 did was wrong and you had ability to
15 control yourself. We typically say the
16 person who stabs someone in the middle of
17 the street and stands there with a knife
18 in their hand is not able to control
19 themselves, but one who stabbed one in
20 secret, hides the knife, and creates an
21 alibi while mentally ill is criminally
22 responsible.

23 So taking that legal standard
24 that law enforcement, prosecutors,
25 judges, you know, applies to the mentally

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2 ill and perhaps a seriously mentally ill,
3 although we would try to weed them out of
4 this process, I would think, for those
5 clinical reasons, how then do you do --
6 how then do you apply the restoration,
7 rehabilitation, reentry under those
8 circumstances for the person returning
9 but also recognizing that there's a whole
10 population who didn't get services? We
11 typically, when I was in the DA's Office,
12 had an offender and a victim. The victim
13 got raped and would have no services.
14 The offender would have services. So,
15 you know, what is the -- how do you
16 identify the serious mental illness
17 services from the ability to reenter and
18 be fully engaged services?

19 DR. DRAINE: So you're talking
20 about the issue largely -- you're
21 bringing up the issue of culpability.

22 COUNCILMAN OH: No, not
23 culpability. Regardless of culpability,
24 they were found guilty, not guilty. The
25 issue is one has what you would say,

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2 every doctor would agree is serious
3 mental illness, inability to control
4 themselves, or if they were convicted,
5 they are recognizably unable to function
6 within the normal set of circumstances.
7 The other one may be able to function,
8 though debilitated by the experience of
9 being in jail, whatever happened in jail,
10 the life that they led prior to being
11 convicted and sentenced, returning to a
12 neighborhood where that kind of
13 experience is not unique. Other people
14 share that experience. I could give an
15 example that many times we have people
16 that are in the military and they seem to
17 function fine. When they are suddenly
18 discharged from the military, they come
19 into the civilian world and they
20 experience depression and other things.
21 They're outside of an environment that
22 they were familiar with. But in this
23 case, you're taking a person who is in
24 prison, incarcerated, and trying to
25 reenter them into a location that they

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2 aren't familiar with and others are
3 familiar with them as well. And the
4 recidivism, does that come from the fact
5 that they reenter -- are they depressed?
6 Do they -- what's the restoration that
7 you are seeking?

8 MS. VASKO: Well, I think some
9 of that is true. If you're not
10 correcting or you're not improving or
11 offering change to the public health of a
12 general neighborhood population and you
13 are reentering that individual into a
14 neighborhood with familiar people,
15 familiar things that put them back in
16 touch with a prior drug history that
17 they've had or a drug use pattern that
18 they've had, then you can almost
19 anticipate that the person will gravitate
20 back to that.

21 I mean, one of the things from
22 a reenter perspective that we are looking
23 at is not only looking at the individuals
24 that are in, but where they came from and
25 beginning to do more of a knowledge base

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2 on what is -- what do our neighborhoods
3 look like, what do our neighborhoods
4 need, where are those hotspots in the
5 system where you may see a larger
6 percentage of individuals that are
7 recidivating back into the prison system,
8 and begin to do public health initiatives
9 around those areas so that you're
10 bringing a general positive, whether it's
11 a training opportunity or you're bringing
12 an ability to unite different services
13 together to establish collaborative
14 efforts to improve the neighborhood, so
15 that you're increasing the likelihood
16 that someone coming back into the
17 neighborhood would stand a better
18 percentage of success than they might
19 have had you not done those
20 interventions.

21 So while we're simultaneously
22 doing an array of things with prison
23 reentry, we're also attempting as a
24 department to do a number of initiatives
25 in terms of just general educational,

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2 incentivizing with small projects and
3 small programs with faith-based
4 initiatives, business owners to improve
5 hiring opportunities for individuals and
6 trying to pilot those kinds of things as
7 well. So public health becomes as
8 critically important as some of the
9 initiatives that are geared specifically
10 to the mental ill or the seriously
11 mentally ill coming out of the jails.

12 So that's one approach that
13 we've taken to attempt to improve the
14 quality of what a person is moving back
15 into.

16 COUNCILMAN OH: So what I'm
17 taking from this is that we have the
18 seriously mentally ill that need better
19 treatment, better healthcare services
20 both in and outside of the prison, in
21 addition to which we have a population of
22 folks that have not been recognized as
23 needing the services in a kind of a more
24 broad spectrum of housing, social
25 services, support mechanisms, although

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2 they return to an environment where their
3 behavior is not unusual, but they need to
4 have services to help them to adjust into
5 a life that while it may not be the
6 normal life in -- there may be high
7 unemployment, high drug use, high crime,
8 but there is an effort to restore them
9 into a sense that they could achieve this
10 type of life and to stay away from the
11 other elements that drew them back into
12 prison, exacerbated by their mental
13 illness and depression and trauma and
14 other things. Is that kind of the
15 program that we are talking about
16 implementing or enhancing for those who
17 are identified as having that need?

18 DR. DRAINE: That's the kind of
19 program that I think we would encourage
20 for anyone with mental illness or
21 psychiatric disability, that they have
22 access to the support services to the
23 extent that it can help them remain in
24 the community. The models are out there
25 to do it.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: I should stop
3 here, but I have just one more, because I
4 hate to lose the opportunity to talk to
5 experts.

6 So out of the blue, nothing to
7 do with this conversation, if I were to
8 categorize -- I'm not saying this is
9 correct -- that people that may be in
10 prison will consist of five categories of
11 people - the brutal, the criminally
12 committed, the weak, the victims of life
13 and circumstances and whatnot, and then
14 those who have made a mistake. The ones
15 who made a mistake, once they're out they
16 don't want to come back. The ones who
17 are victims, they're the low-end
18 criminals of the neighborhood who always
19 get caught and get arrested again and
20 again. The weak, they're just always
21 revolving around low-end crime and they
22 want to hang around the bigger criminals.
23 The criminally committed, smart or
24 otherwise, they are devoted to a life of
25 crime, drug dealers, organized criminals,

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2 the lucrative whatever they are, and then
3 just the plain old brutal.

4 In terms of population in our
5 prisons, do we kind of know how many or
6 percentage of what is what, how much of
7 our space is taken up by those who are
8 just brutal to other people, rapists and
9 murderers, aggravated assault, mayhem,
10 what percentage are like organized
11 criminals, what percentage are people who
12 made a mistake, you know, just
13 shouldn't -- abnormal for them. You
14 identified those low-level drug dealers,
15 war on crime, happened to be out there
16 selling some cocaine, they got the long
17 sentences. They're just replaced by
18 others. They make up a large portion.

19 Do we know the population of
20 the people in prison in some kind of
21 category like that?

22 DR. DRAINE: I don't know
23 the -- Councilman Oh, you sound like
24 you'd make a decent criminologist.

25 COUNCILMAN OH: No, no, no.

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2 The reason I'm asking is because as
3 the --

4 DR. DRAINE: That was -- I
5 would probably use different terms, but
6 that was a relatively decent
7 classification. But the thing we know in
8 terms of how people see and examine the
9 criminal justice system and who goes
10 through the criminal justice system and
11 how, what we know is that the number of
12 people who commit crime is much huger
13 than we can imagine and we could ever
14 capture, because if you include any
15 crime, we'd include, you know,
16 jaywalking, you know, where it's a crime
17 and things like that. So it depends on
18 what classifications that you're going to
19 use. And you go from that, which is the
20 broadest category, all the way down to
21 the very small categories.

22 COUNCILMAN OH: Let me --

23 DR. DRAINE: Which largely are
24 the ones -- I would probably put them in
25 the single digits percentage-wise.

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2 COUNCILMAN OH: Let me hone
3 down my question, because I wasn't just
4 trying to categorize people. The reason
5 I was asking it is because when you're
6 talking about serious mental illness and
7 mentally ill and where the program is
8 going to be effective, who it targets,
9 who wants to be part of the program, and
10 then we look at, okay, so of this -- so
11 let's say they all suffer some type of
12 abnormality that we would say in society
13 is some mental illness, some trauma in
14 their life, but there's a portion that
15 can benefit from this restoration,
16 reentry, and they're looking to reenter,
17 be restored, have a productive life. And
18 so the issue is not everybody may want it
19 or be part of it. So what is -- how
20 do -- what is the cost? That's something
21 we have to always consider. We don't
22 have a dollar, what's the program, what's
23 the cost, how do we prioritize something
24 like this to make it other than a
25 discussion. How do we bring it into

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2 reality of funding, prioritization, those
3 type of things?

4 DR. DRAINE: Right. So it
5 probably is a matter that people that
6 recidivate the most who are more
7 committed, as you frame it, committed
8 criminals -- I understand what you mean
9 by that -- are the people that cost us
10 more than other people in the criminal
11 justice system. If they also have a
12 mental illness that needs to be treated
13 while they are inside, it costs there as
14 well. I would add, though, another
15 dimension to that, and I would add the
16 dimension --

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: If I could
18 interrupt for one second. I'd just like
19 to take care of a couple housekeeping
20 issues. I'd like to recognize the
21 presence of a quorum and recognize that
22 with us today are President Clarke,
23 Councilwoman Blackwell, myself,
24 Councilmen Jones and Squilla, and
25 Councilman Oh. I'm sorry. And if the

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2 Clerk would read the resolution.

3 THE CLERK: Resolution No.
4 150131, authorizing Council's Committees
5 on the Disabled and Special Needs and
6 Public Safety to hold joint public
7 hearings investigating the barriers faced
8 by people with serious mental health
9 issues who are transitioning from
10 incarceration to the Philadelphia
11 community.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.
13 You can continue with your
14 answer. Thank you.

15 DR. DRAINE: The other
16 dimension I wanted to add is time, that
17 one of the things that we know -- one of
18 the new things we know about mental
19 illness is that it is not an "and" crime,
20 and criminal behavior, that it is not a
21 permanent condition or a permanent label
22 that we attach to someone, that people
23 change over time, particularly as they
24 get older.

25 I have seen in my time in

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2 working in this area and interviewing
3 people and talking to people, I have
4 seen -- and I can imagine any number of
5 people that I know who have lived lives
6 like you describe and, as they grew
7 older, reached out for compassion for
8 their illness and compassion for life,
9 because they may have eliminated options
10 along the way, but they are still in our
11 community with an illness suffering from
12 that illness as anyone else who would
13 have that illness and deserving of
14 compassion because of their dignity as a
15 human being and as a citizen.

16 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
17 much. Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Are there
19 any other questions?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Seeing
22 none, I would just like to go out of
23 order and thank the witnesses for
24 testifying today, and I would like to ask
25 Bill Hart, the Executive Director of the

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2 Mayor's Office of Reintegration Services,
3 RISE, and Mike Resnick, the Director of
4 Public Safety, to come forward.

5 Thank you so much.

6 (Witnesses approached witness
7 table.)

8 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I
9 appreciate you being here today, and I
10 know you have a very busy schedule.
11 Would you please identify yourselves for
12 the record.

13 MR. RESNICK: Sure. Michael
14 Resnick, Director of Public Safety for
15 the City of Philadelphia. With me is
16 Bill Hart, the Director of the Mayor's
17 Office for Reintegration Services for
18 Ex-Offenders, and it's my privilege to
19 introduce you to our newest Deputy
20 Commissioner for Philadelphia Prison
21 System, Deputy Commissioner Blanche
22 Carney, who is charge of Restorative and
23 Transitional Services.

24 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
25 very much for being with us and welcome

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2 to this conversation.

3 I just have one question for
4 Mr. Resnick and Mr. Hart. Would you tell
5 us a little bit about the pilot
6 initiative that the City is undertaking
7 regarding the support of people with
8 mental health issues who are reentering
9 into the community from the Philadelphia
10 prisons, and specifically what are you
11 trying to accomplish with this
12 initiative, what partnerships and
13 collaborations and how would you sustain
14 it?

15 MR. RESNICK: Sure. I'll let
16 Mr. Hart take that one since he has been
17 spearheading the initiative. He's been
18 doing some great work on it as well.

19 MR. HART: Bill Hart, the
20 Executive Director --

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Could you
22 please pull your microphone a little
23 closer.

24 MR. HART: Bill Hart, the
25 Executive Director of RISE. I offer this

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2 testimony as a reentry professional, not
3 necessarily a clinician about behavioral
4 health issues.

5 But with that said, the genesis
6 of the SMI pilot came from us looking at
7 recidivism at the PPS system, and as we
8 looked at the three-year rate of
9 recidivism, it became very clear to us
10 that it's that first year where we have
11 the highest level of recidivism. And as
12 we start to drill down on what cohort
13 groups fit into that category for the
14 first year, it became glaringly visible
15 that our mental ill and our seriously
16 mental ill population are our frequent
17 flyers. We release, they come back, we
18 re-release.

19 So that said, the impact was to
20 how do we reduce recidivism, how do we
21 reduce the cost of the taxpayers' burden
22 for the work that we do around public
23 safety.

24 So our goal is to maintain a
25 continuity of care from treatment and

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2 detention and post-release treatment.

3 Specifically, how do we remove some of
4 the barriers, the immediate barriers that
5 face the SMI population.

6 So to answer your question
7 about the collaborative partners, our
8 task force team consists of at this
9 moment the PPS system, our social
10 workers, our medical staff, RISE, the
11 Department of Behavioral Health --

12 MR. RESNICK: Pennsylvania
13 Department of Behavioral Health.

14 MR. HART: Pennsylvania
15 Department of Behavioral Health, PHMC,
16 DHS, the Office of Supportive Housing,
17 PennDOT, and our academic partners from
18 Temple University.

19 We looked at it at first as how
20 do we train the partners that are
21 involved in this engagement. It became
22 very clear that we need to be better
23 trained to better understand the
24 challenges of the SMI population. So
25 most of the partners have gone through

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2 the trauma of informed care. I'll say
3 more specifically most of the partners
4 also have gone through the COMPASS
5 training with the Department of Human
6 Services, with the goal of connecting,
7 I'll say, our guys and our ladies to
8 medical benefits immediately.

9 The workflow with what we do
10 sounds something like this. Our partners
11 are obviously the PPS system, it's RISE,
12 it's our forensic peer -- our certified
13 forensic peer specialists, and then
14 further out, our providers in the world
15 who do services for the behavioral and
16 intellectually challenged population.

17 So the workflow starts with an
18 evaluation and assessment of sentenced
19 clients. We've identified a cohort group
20 of 117 that fit into what's been
21 diagnosed as the seriously mental ill
22 population. We're beginning 120 days out
23 with engagement, with the evaluation, and
24 working on just cultivating the
25 relationship with the clients that we'll

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2 be serving not only in detention but
3 post-release. We're working on their
4 discharge plans. And additionally, we're
5 reaching out to the family support system
6 that they may or may not be returning
7 home to. That is also accompanied with
8 the COMPASS application. The COMPASS
9 application is simply an application that
10 will turn on their medical benefits. We
11 partner up with the Department of Human
12 Services that now we have a central point
13 of contact that all of our applications
14 are submitted five days to release, with
15 the goal and the objective is that
16 medical benefits are turned on
17 immediately upon release, so there is,
18 again, that continuity of care from
19 incarceration, detention to post-release.

20 MR. RESNICK: And that's
21 important -- not to interrupt, Bill --
22 because when someone is incarcerated,
23 their benefits are turned off. When
24 they're discharged, it's a process to
25 have them reapplied and turned back on

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2 again. And if a person doesn't have
3 access to their benefits, they don't have
4 access to their care and their
5 medication, they quickly decompensate,
6 they re-offend, and they're right back in
7 our custody. So this is an important
8 part of the program, to make sure that an
9 individual is released with access to
10 their benefits.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: I don't want
12 to interrupt your testimony. For the
13 record, could you let us know when people
14 are released from State Road, how much
15 medication are they given to transition
16 to turn on their benefits?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARNEY:
18 There's 14 days medication and a script
19 that is given to the returning citizen.
20 So they have their medication or any
21 blister pack medication that they can
22 take with them, and then that script is
23 recognized by our health centers. And
24 the crucial part with this piece is, once
25 the application and the benefits are

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2 turned on, they can then get that script
3 filled promptly and continue on with the
4 medication, so there's no interruption.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: What's the
6 average time? And this is not in your
7 wheelhouse, not in your responsibility
8 area, but what's the average time to turn
9 on the benefit? So if we have 14 days
10 worth of medication, what's the average
11 time of reigniting a benefit?

12 MR. HART: I'm going to take an
13 attempt to answer the question. It
14 depends, Chairman. It depends on the
15 returning citizen's ability to, one, have
16 identification that's appropriate to get
17 the application turned on. That's, just
18 a sidebar, one of the other relationships
19 that we brokered with the Department of
20 Transportation for this pilot. They're
21 offering up 120 state-issued driver's
22 license or non-driver's license. So it's
23 a valid piece of identification to help
24 with that application process.

25 Also residency becomes another

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2 issue. If in fact in their home plan,
3 their discharge plan, there isn't a place
4 where mail can go to, that creates
5 another barrier that lengthens that time
6 as to when the benefits are turned on.
7 One of the things that we have done is
8 now we're using RISE as a central point
9 of contact for our guys and ladies that
10 may not have permanent resident addresses
11 and that as a, I'll say, drop point to
12 receive their mail so it's a central
13 location. It's another touch point for
14 us post-release for the clients that we
15 serve.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: So there are
17 a number of factors, I get it, but what
18 would be helpful to me when you come back
19 by way of budget, if you could take a
20 little bit of research time to find out
21 what the average time of a returning
22 citizen's benefits are. So that if we
23 can reach out to our friends -- I say
24 that sparingly sometimes -- in the State
25 Legislature, we might be able to help or

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2 ask them for help to have that looked at.

3 MR. RESNICK: We'll look into
4 that.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

6 MR. HART: Chairman, also
7 what's fun about, I'll say, about this
8 workflow is the way that we have it
9 positioned right now, there are
10 touches/engagements with our clients 120
11 days out, 90 days out and what I call
12 zero day, which is the day of release.
13 Then there's a warm pass-off to our
14 certified peer specialist. In the ideal
15 world, we will be waiting for our clients
16 as they walk out of detention from State
17 Road and that pass-off will either take
18 them to residential treatment,
19 non-residential treatment. So there's,
20 again, that continuity of care.

21 As the process plays out with
22 the forensic peer specialists, then we
23 engage our partners in the mental and
24 behavioral health community to connect
25 them with resources.

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2 So, again, the goal is how do
3 we continue the care, how do we remove
4 the barriers for this population in
5 particular for that first year where we
6 see the recidivism rates at its highest.

7 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Could you
8 please go back to the point that you
9 identified PennDOT's participation in
10 non-driver's license identification. Did
11 you say up to 120?

12 MR. HART: Yes.

13 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Why is
14 there a numerical ceiling on that?

15 MR. HART: Now, I'm going to
16 answer the question as best I can. The
17 Department of Corrections has a
18 relationship with PennDOT that every
19 returning citizen leaving state detention
20 will walk out with a state-issued ID.
21 However, it has not been offered up to
22 the counties. So for the past three
23 years, we've been attempting to negotiate
24 with PennDOT to open up that resource to
25 returning citizens in the county, and

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2 they've pushed back. So we repackaged
3 the ask and now put it in the form of an
4 ask for identification for a pilot
5 program that we're going to serve 120
6 people. So from my perspective, it was
7 just an inroads into solidifying that
8 relationship that hopefully we can grow
9 and to be able to offer up state-issued
10 ID's for everyone returning out of the
11 county systems.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And that
13 can be done administratively?

14 MR. HART: Yes.

15 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: It doesn't
16 require any act of the Legislature to do
17 that?

18 MR. HART: Yes.

19 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'd like
20 to follow up with you on that. Thank
21 you.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Ma'am,
23 welcome to City government.

24 So as we start to look at what
25 we can do to smooth that transition out

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2 from incarceration to our streets, do you
3 have any suggestions on that by way of
4 what we can do also particularly for our
5 people with mental challenges or physical
6 disabilities, anything that we can help
7 you do?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARNEY:

9 Yes. The process would have to be
10 streamlined. Oftentimes for the
11 sentenced population with the SMI
12 diagnosis, we're working with First
13 Judicial District, Mental Health Courts,
14 FIR, Department of Behavioral Health.
15 That population has been diagnosed.
16 There's a treatment plan in place and
17 there's an engagement process pre- and
18 post-release. For the larger population
19 for those folks that may not be sentenced
20 as of yet in our system but come in and
21 out of our system, have mental health
22 issues, a streamlined approach whereby
23 there's a centralized process, someone
24 coming out that we've identified as
25 having a mental illness. They can be

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2 engaged pre-release. That's the key,
3 because once folk that have mental health
4 issues, they're navigating a system or
5 attempting to or not. So having after
6 care, case management engagement,
7 reconnection with intensive case
8 management or an agent or the
9 capacity-building for agencies that are
10 currently doing the work in the system,
11 in the communities, it has to be an
12 integrated approach. Right now pretrial
13 folk that come in and out of our system,
14 we're seeing them. We know the
15 diagnosis, but if they're getting out,
16 they're not sentenced. That approach,
17 there's a disconnect. It has to be a
18 hand-off and that the agency engaging the
19 returning citizen has to come behind the
20 walls to start that process. Because you
21 lose in that first 30 days, whether it be
22 medication continuation, filling a
23 script, engagement with medical
24 assistance reactivation, and then
25 continuity of care. That's crucial. So

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2 establishing how we look at funding and
3 building capacities for agencies to do
4 the work post-release.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: So is there
6 a benefit bank system 20 days, 50 days
7 before a person is scheduled to be
8 released that says you are eligible for
9 the following benefits should you choose
10 to accept that? Is that process
11 happening inside?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARNEY:
13 Not currently. This pilot project that
14 Mr. Hart spoke of is to hopefully build
15 upon that. So with the demonstration, if
16 we're engaging this SMI population now,
17 starting that COMPASS application,
18 hopefully that would inform an expansion
19 and that process would then expand across
20 anyone coming out of our system.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: So in a
22 perfect world, 30 days before they're
23 released they go down, see their social
24 worker, case worker, and they are
25 codified as to mental, drug treatment

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2 kind of services that are available to
3 them, housing services, whatever, and
4 then they're given that package, that
5 health package. I'd be interested from
6 the time you start to next budget year,
7 see if that impacts the number of
8 returning citizens, if it helps at all.
9 Because if I'm struggling with a whole
10 range of issues, you know, some of the
11 little things -- it's not the mountain
12 that you have to climb. It's the pebbles
13 that get in the sand on the way up the
14 mountain that can trip you up.

15 So if we can measure that to
16 see if a little bit of help on the front
17 end stops the recidivism, I think that
18 might go a long way to taking a stab at
19 putting more resources to a particular
20 service or program. All right?

21 Welcome on board.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARNEY:

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Mr.

25 Chairman.

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2 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
3 all for testifying today and thank you
4 for your patience.

5 (Thank you.)

6 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: At this
7 time, I would like to ask Matt Tice, who
8 is the Director of Forensic Liaison
9 Program, Pathways to Housing, come
10 forward.

11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I'm sorry.
14 I'm sorry. I'm going to -- I'd like to
15 ask Eric Stryd, who is the Assistant
16 Chief of the Diversion Courts Unit,
17 District Attorney's Office, and Jeanette
18 Palmer, the Supervisor of the Mental
19 Health Unit, Adult Probation and Parole,
20 to come forward. Pardon me.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: One other
22 question. I'm sorry. You can be seated,
23 but one other question.

24 The Pennsylvania Commission on
25 Crime and Delinquency, to what degree do

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2 you guys interact with them?

3 MR. HART: Chairman, we work --

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: You got to

5 say your name, come to the mike.

6 (Witness approached witness
7 table.)

8 MR. HART: Chairman, again,
9 Bill Hart, the Executive Director of
10 RISE.

11 We're working pretty closely
12 with PCCD on multiple levels. From a
13 policy perspective, we engage them
14 actively with the Reentry Coalition.
15 I'll say closer to home, PCCD has been
16 one of our guiding resources as we look
17 at some of the housing initiatives that
18 may be able to, I'll say, impact the,
19 I'll say, that barrier of coming home,
20 having stable housing, what some of the
21 other alternatives will be. So we're
22 working very closely with PCCD.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: So you work
24 very closely with them and -- okay. That
25 will do.

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2 MR. HART: Thank you, Chairman.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
4 much.

5 Good afternoon. Is it
6 afternoon? Let me check. Yes, it's
7 afternoon. Good afternoon.

8 MS. PALMER: Good afternoon.

9 MR. STRYD: Good afternoon.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Welcome.

11 Thank you for your patience. You can
12 begin your testimony in any order that
13 you see fit. State your name for the
14 record and begin your testimony. Pull
15 that mike a little closer to you.

16 MR. STRYD: Good morning,
17 Chairman O'Brien, Chairman Jones, and
18 members of the joint Committee. Thank
19 you for inviting me to testify. My name
20 is Eric Stryd. I am the Assistant Chief
21 of the Diversion Courts Unit at the
22 District Attorney's Office. As Assistant
23 Chief, I am responsible for running a
24 number of reentry and diversion programs,
25 including County Intermediate Punishment,

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2 State Reentry Court, MENTOR, and Mental
3 Health Court. Prior to becoming the
4 Assistant Chief, I was in the Trial
5 Division for over six years handling
6 non-fatal shootings and other violent
7 felonies in South Philadelphia. Many of
8 these non-fatal shootings and violent
9 felonies involved defendants from the
10 Focused Deterrence program. Prior to
11 joining the District Attorney's Office, I
12 worked for a year and a half as an
13 Assistant Public Defender in Missouri.

14 The First Judicial District
15 Mental Health Court was Pennsylvania's
16 first reentry mental health court and was
17 started in 2009 under the leadership of
18 Judge Sheila Woods Skipper and has
19 processed over 3,000 cases since its
20 inception. Mental Health Court is a
21 post-sentence reentry program designed to
22 provide specialized services to those who
23 struggle with mental illness. It
24 provides an alternative to incarceration
25 for non-violent offenders with mental

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2 illness and co-occurring disorders by
3 preparing those individuals for reentry
4 into supervised communities. The goal of
5 Mental Health Court aims to reduce the
6 jail population and criminal justice
7 costs by balancing justice, treatment,
8 and public safety.

9 Now, defendants can be referred
10 to Mental Health Court through a variety
11 avenues. Cases can be identified by
12 judges, defense attorneys, probation
13 officers or assistant district attorneys.
14 Once a defendant is identified as a
15 possible candidate for Mental Health
16 Court, a formal referral is submitted to
17 the Program Coordinator, Patricia Wilson.
18 Ms. Wilson then reviews the application
19 and the defendant's mental health history
20 to determine whether the defendant is a
21 good fit for the program. I also review
22 the defendant's application, his mental
23 health history, and also the facts of the
24 case to determine whether he or she is
25 eligible for the program. If both the

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2 District Attorney's Office and Ms.

3 Wilson agree that the applicant is an
4 appropriate candidate, the defendant is
5 accepted into Mental Health Court.

6 Now, when the defendant enters
7 the program, President Judge Woods
8 Skipper explains the program in detail
9 and also explains what our expectations
10 are for that participant.

11 Once the defendant enters the
12 Mental Health Court, he or she will be
13 required to follow all the conditions of
14 the program, which include attending
15 mental health treatment, remaining
16 medicine compliant, and meeting all other
17 conditions set forth by the Mental Health
18 Court probation officer.

19 Mental Health Court has a
20 number of built-in rewards and sanctions
21 for its participants. If the participant
22 is doing well, he or she will receive
23 applause in the courtroom, see a decrease
24 to the probation reporting requirements
25 or a lowering of the probation

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2 supervision level and ultimately a
3 reduction in the sentence. If the
4 defendant does poorly or violates the
5 rules of the program, sanctions include
6 writing an essay, having to sit in the
7 jury box, increased probation
8 supervision, jail time or ultimately
9 expulsion from the program.

10 Now, when I review an
11 application for Mental Health Court, I
12 usually focus on three things. First of
13 all, does the defendant have a serious
14 mental illness. The program is designed
15 for defendants who are suffering from
16 bipolar, major depressive disorder,
17 schizoaffective disorder or
18 schizophrenia.

19 Second, what are the facts of
20 the current case. We are targeting
21 individuals with non-violent offenses.
22 So defendants with sexual assault cases
23 or other violent cases will be rejected.

24 And, third, what is the
25 defendant's prior criminal history. If

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2 the defendant has a history of violent
3 behavior, he will be rejected from the
4 program.

5 Now, we are not bound by these
6 three areas, as every defendant is always
7 looked at on a case-by-case basis.

8 However, they provide guidance to us as
9 we try to seek consistency in both our
10 referrals and approvals.

11 Serious mental illness affects
12 a large segment of our general prison
13 population and remains a problem for our
14 society and our prison system. Our
15 prisons often do not have the ability to
16 provide the necessary services to a
17 defendant who suffers from a serious
18 mental illness. When a defendant does
19 not receive treatment for his underlying
20 problems, it often leads to rearrests for
21 new charges. This harms not only the
22 defendant, but the victim of the crimes
23 and the community at large. Mental
24 Health Court makes a difference in these
25 defendants' lives by providing intensive

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2 supervision, case management, and
3 treatment in order to help the defendant
4 reenter society. When a defendant does
5 not re-offend, he saves taxpayers money,
6 reduces risks of harm to his community,
7 and also helps himself.

8 Now, while providing services
9 and treatment to participants in Mental
10 Health Court is much more cost efficient
11 than incarcerating them, it is also very
12 time-consuming and labor-intensive.
13 Mental Health Court requires many groups
14 and agencies to work together for the
15 betterment of the individual and society.
16 In order for Mental Health Court to
17 continue to be successful going forward,
18 I see two immediate concerns.

19 One is bed space. While we
20 have many wonderful partners in Mental
21 Health Court, we often run into the
22 problem of not having enough beds for our
23 participants. Our city needs to increase
24 the amount of beds for people who need
25 in-patient treatment for their mental

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2 illness. This includes more beds at
3 secure facilities and also more beds at
4 non-secure facilities. To give you an
5 example, Norristown State Hospital
6 currently has a waiting list of 99
7 individuals for the male population and
8 an approximate wait time of one year.
9 This is unacceptable.

10 The second point would be
11 resources required to keep the program
12 running.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Excuse me.
14 Can you stop there. Did I hear
15 Norristown wait time of a year?

16 MR. STRYD: Yes.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

18 MR. STRYD: Resources required
19 to keep the program running. Mental
20 Health Court requires much more time than
21 merely trying a case. That is in fact
22 one of the primary purposes of Mental
23 Health Court, to ensure that the
24 offenders in the program receive the
25 time, programs, and followup necessary to

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2 help them avoid committing new crimes and
3 to help treat their underlying
4 conditions. As you know, the savings
5 associated with Mental Health Court such
6 as reduced prison costs are significant.
7 Unfortunately, the caseloads are often
8 unmanageable. With more investment, the
9 system will yield even better results.

10 Now, we believe that we have
11 the tools and the knowledge to deal with
12 the growing mental health population in
13 the criminal justice system. Mental
14 Health Court is an effective alternative
15 to the revolving door of custody for
16 mentally ill offenders. This is a
17 special population that requires a
18 specialized approach.

19 I want to thank Council for its
20 interest in this subject, and I'm happy
21 to answer any of your questions.

22 MS. PALMER: Good afternoon,
23 Council.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you pull
25 that mike a little bit closer.

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2 MS. PALMER: Good afternoon,
3 Councilman Jones, Councilman O'Brien,
4 esteemed panelists, and guests. I would
5 like to thank you for this opportunity to
6 speak with you regarding this very
7 important issue.

8 My name is Jeanette Palmer and
9 I can attest that I have worked for the
10 First Judicial District of Pennsylvania,
11 specifically the Probation and Parole
12 Department, proudly for over 27 years. I
13 am currently the Supervisor of the Mental
14 Health Unit of the Philadelphia Adult
15 Probation and Parole Department. This is
16 one of two units specifically designated
17 to supervise offenders with mental
18 illness. The other unit, the Specialized
19 Court Unit, including the Mental Health
20 Treatment Court, Veterans Court, and
21 Dawn's Court, is supervised by Christine
22 Carassai, who is present with me today.

23 I personally supervise 11
24 probation officers and oversee 1,450
25 probation and parole offenders who have

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2 been court ordered to have specialized
3 probation officers to assist them with
4 successfully completing their period of
5 supervision.

6 I was transferred to the Mental
7 Health Unit on February the 10th of 2014
8 and immediately began the process of
9 communicating with as many mental health
10 partners that I could to assist our
11 population. I may add that prior to
12 supervising the Mental Health Unit, I
13 supervised the Forensic Intensive
14 Recovery Unit, or FIR, of the Probation
15 Department where I've gained experience
16 and knowledge in the funding process for
17 offenders who have drug and alcohol
18 addictions as well as mental health
19 issues related to the use of drug and
20 alcohol.

21 From 1999 through 2002, I was
22 employed with Horizon House,
23 Incorporated. This organization
24 specifically assisted people with mental
25 health disabilities. While working with

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2 this organization, I gained the love,
3 respect, and admiration of people in
4 general who suffer with mental illness.

5 In December of 2014, the Mental
6 Health Unit of the Probation Department
7 supervised 1,481 active offenders, with a
8 total of 2,423 active cases. Three
9 hundred and sixteen, or 21 percent, of
10 our offender population was incarcerated.
11 The Mental Health Unit received 40 new
12 offenders in this month, with a total of
13 103 new cases. The average caseload size
14 of the Mental Health officer is 135
15 offenders. The probation officers had
16 face-to-face contact with 1,189 offenders
17 during this month, which equals a 77
18 percent face-to-face contact rate. The
19 total number of phone contacts made by
20 the officers to the offenders or related
21 parties to the offenders was 1,404 calls.
22 I have provided you just a few of our
23 year-end statistics, but I must state
24 this, by far, was the least busy month of
25 the year.

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2 The probation officers are
3 responsible for ensuring that the
4 offender complies with the rules,
5 regulations, and the direct order of the
6 court. Essentially we follow the
7 direction of the judge's court order.
8 The Mental Health Units of the Probation
9 and Parole Department are very unique in
10 that their officers must request and want
11 to work with this very challenging
12 population. Yes, we are stern, but we
13 are compassionate. We wear the hat of
14 counselor, law enforcement officer,
15 mediator, therapist and, yes, we are
16 confidants. We meet with the judge, the
17 attorney, the family, the therapist, the
18 treatment providers in general. Many
19 times we are all things to our offenders.

20 I am here to make a passionate
21 plea for your assistance. The Probation
22 and Parole Department needs housing
23 programs, in-patient programs, more
24 intensive case managers for the mentally
25 ill offender. Have you ever gone to work

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2 and happen to see a man or a woman
3 talking to themselves? Or perhaps you
4 have seen a person swinging at the air?
5 Or maybe you just watched a man lying on
6 the church steps eating out of a paper
7 bag? Chances are that this individual
8 may be one of our offenders assigned to
9 the Mental Health Unit of the Probation
10 and Parole Department. The lack of
11 resources for this population is growing
12 every day.

13 Our offenders are being
14 released from custody, jail or prison,
15 with nothing. In most cases, if they
16 have not been court ordered to a specific
17 program or transported by the
18 Philadelphia County Sheriff's Department,
19 they are sent to the City shelter system.
20 This more times than often leaves the
21 offender vulnerable, as the shelter
22 system is not always available and
23 suitable for locating housing for this
24 population. Because the offender has no
25 proper identification, no medication, and

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2 sometimes no family contact information
3 or family to assist them, they are forced
4 to live on the street. We will always
5 attempt to have an offender 302'd for
6 safety purposes, but in most cases this
7 is not an option for the Probation
8 Department.

9 Secondly, when medication is
10 not available for the offender, and this
11 could be for any number of reasons. They
12 have lost their benefits due to not
13 completing necessary paperwork for the
14 Department of Welfare, they have lost
15 their identification. Sometimes our
16 offenders lose their medication and
17 cannot get a refill. They have no one to
18 assist them and no one often to help them
19 at all and they are left to spiral out of
20 control. Due to the arrest record and
21 often violent offenses of the individual,
22 it is not appropriate or they will not
23 accept them into many mental health
24 housing programs. When the offender
25 reports to the Probation Department, we

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2 are left with no choice but to remand
3 this individual into custody. While in
4 jail, they can have a warm bed, so to
5 speak, medications and some stability.
6 We will request a court-ordered mental
7 health evaluation for the purpose of an
8 updated diagnosis and competency. This
9 solution, as you can envision, is never a
10 solution.

11 Earlier in my testimony I
12 provided statistical information to give
13 you an idea of how many offenders we
14 supervise and the high number of issues
15 that we are confronted with daily. If we
16 had programs, case managers, beds,
17 nurses, and staff that would willingly
18 accept the mental health offender, we
19 could reduce the number of offenders who
20 are incarcerated. While incarceration
21 is, so to speak again, is better than
22 being on the street, mental health
23 therapeutic treatment is unavailable.
24 Statistics have proven that all recovery
25 and mental stability works best when

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2 combined with treatment and medications.

3 This begins with stable housing, food,
4 and clothing.

5 In closing, yes, we supervise
6 offenders. They are people who have
7 broken the law. They are often unstable,
8 often without family. However, they are
9 people in need. The Probation Department
10 cares. We care about the City of
11 Philadelphia and its citizens. We care
12 about ensuring the court order is honored
13 and obeyed, but we also care about our
14 offenders. They are in need of our
15 assistance and they are in need of our
16 care and our expertise. Availing
17 affordable housing to this population as
18 well as Social Security benefits, I might
19 add, would save our city from housing
20 offenders in custody wandering the
21 streets of Philadelphia or not being
22 properly supervised in general. This is
23 an important issue.

24 I thank you for this
25 opportunity and your consideration of

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2 this matter.

3 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
4 so much for your testimony.

5 Mr. Stryd, some mental
6 advocates have concerns about Mental
7 Health Court's emphasis on medication
8 compliance and treatment adherence. How
9 would you say the DA's Office addresses
10 these concerns to ensure that all
11 rehabilitation options are being
12 explored?

13 MR. STRYD: Well, I'd say we're
14 part of a team for Mental Health Court.
15 That's one of the beauties about Mental
16 Health Court, is that we're working in
17 conjunction with the public defenders,
18 with Judge Woods Skipper, with everyone.
19 So if there became a concern over whether
20 someone needed medication or did not need
21 medication, we would leave that up to the
22 professionals.

23 I don't know as much about
24 certainly medication and mental health as
25 people who were trained to do it every

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2 single day. So while entering into the
3 program, defendants need to sign a list
4 of things that they must do to enter the
5 program. One of them is to be compliant
6 with their medication. But if the team
7 and the court decides that medication
8 needs to be stepped down, lowered or
9 changed, taken away completely, that's
10 something we usually will work out
11 amongst ourselves, and it's not a
12 requirement if the professionals are
13 saying you don't need it.

14 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And,
15 Ms. Palmer, we've heard a lot of
16 testimony today about individuals with
17 psychiatric disabilities leaving prison.
18 Can you speak to the adequacy or lack of
19 appropriate services --

20 MS. PALMER: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: -- from
22 your lens.

23 MS. PALMER: From our
24 perspective, we know that prisons are not
25 designed to necessarily therapeutically

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2 help people with mental illness. So
3 where you spoke earlier of not having
4 places like Byberry or Woodhaven or
5 because of the violent offense of the
6 person, they're not able to enter into a
7 particular mental health program, they're
8 left on their own. There isn't a real
9 treatment option while incarcerated for
10 the mentally ill. I mean, the treatment
11 option is medication. Mr. Zeigler
12 testified earlier that person may be
13 placed in the hole. The modification is
14 to curtail the behavior.

15 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN:

16 Mr. Chairman.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. Thank
18 you.

19 So you work with Focused
20 Deterrence?

21 MR. STRYD: I previously did.
22 Prior to becoming the Assistant Chief of
23 the Diversion Unit, I was assigned to
24 South Division to handle a lot of the
25 shootings and violent offenses. So I

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2 did --

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Non-fatal
4 shootings.

5 MR. STRYD: Non-fatal
6 shootings.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: I remember
8 that.

9 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And we
10 want to expand that program, by the way.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah, we do
12 want to expand that program, by the way.

13 So in your experience now, both
14 of you, the closing of Byberry that
15 arguably was a focused kind of treatment
16 center, some people -- there's varying
17 report cards on how effective and how
18 efficient and how cost effective they
19 were. As we've evolved into in-patient
20 treatment in the system, if you were to
21 give it a grade, A to F, what would it
22 be?

23 MS. PALMER: At best I would
24 give it a C. There are programs that
25 will accept our offenders, and I don't

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2 have the legality and the exact laws on
3 this, but some of the things that caused
4 Byberry to close was the idea that the
5 offender has the right or any individual
6 has the right to participate in their own
7 wellness. And so some of that also
8 triggered the closing of some of these
9 institutions.

10 Some of the offenders -- the
11 offenders that we supervise in my unit
12 and that are supervised in some of the
13 other -- not necessarily the Treatment
14 Court, but definitely in the normal
15 Probation and Parole Mental Health Unit,
16 the offenses can be very violent. Our
17 offenders are on probation for aggravated
18 assault. They're on probation for, some
19 of them, for murder. We have very
20 serious offenses, and our offenders,
21 again, are mentally ill. So being able
22 to go into a program like Byberry or some
23 place where they have round-the-clock
24 supervised -- trained, supervised staff
25 that can administer medication, that can

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2 designate when the medication is altering
3 the personality negatively or positively,
4 that's necessary for this particular
5 oftentimes violent population. The
6 people that we see walking around
7 downtown are often that population, and
8 as you all know yourself, that population
9 is increasing. There are more and more
10 people not medicated.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: If I recall
12 your testimony, it's about a thousand
13 plus.

14 MS. PALMER: I supervise 1,480
15 offenders.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: One
17 thousand.

18 MS. PALMER: Four hundred and
19 eighty active.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: More like
21 1,500.

22 MS. PALMER: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: So how many
24 staff -- what is the case ratio per --

25 MS. PALMER: I have 11

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2 probation officers that I currently
3 supervise. I should have 12. We're
4 short one, but that person will be
5 replaced eventually. So right now the
6 average case of the size is 135
7 offenders.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: So 135
9 offenders. How often, in a perfect
10 world, should we be interacting with that
11 person? At least once a month?

12 MS. PALMER: Yes. We see our
13 offenders no less than monthly.
14 Depending upon what's going on with them,
15 the reporting for my unit is often
16 increased. I would say we rarely see
17 anyone monthly. Our people have too many
18 needs, and some of the -- you asked
19 earlier about the mental health
20 disorders. I mean, we do have people
21 with, as you heard, bipolar and
22 schizophrenia, PTSD, ADHD, personality
23 disorders. Oppositional defiance
24 disorder is also coming into my unit at a
25 rapid rate. So we're supervising people

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2 with serious mental illness. A lot of
3 our offenders are at home. A lot of our
4 offenders are between the ages of 18 and
5 26. More and more you'll find this
6 population growing in paranoid
7 schizophrenia and schizophrenia,
8 oppositional defiance disorder.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: So how can
10 we help?

11 MS. PALMER: We need one -- I
12 mean, almost all of our issues have been
13 at least brought before you this morning.
14 We need housing. We need when a person
15 is released from the Probation
16 Department, when a person is released
17 from custody, that information should
18 begin at the prison. They should know
19 whether or not they're going to be
20 released with identification. They
21 should have a housing plan. And if there
22 isn't a housing plan, then we just need
23 to be presented with that information.
24 It would help if a person is eligible for
25 Social Security income or Social Security

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2 disability, that that application is
3 begun before they're released. It's very
4 difficult to catch up with a body that's
5 not mentally competent.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: And I don't
7 know if it's SSI or whatever that federal
8 Social Security designation is, the
9 average time for a decision is a year.

10 MS. PALMER: A lot of our
11 defenders -- I cannot give you the
12 percentage -- have already had that
13 income allotted to them. When they go
14 into custody for any variety of reasons,
15 a new offense, a new arrest,
16 non-compliance of the conditions of the
17 court's order or if the person falls into
18 a state of incompetency and we may have
19 to remand them into custody, if they're
20 in custody for longer than 30 days, they
21 will lose their benefits. And so the
22 process has to begin once they're
23 released.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: So it starts
25 all over again?

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2 MS. PALMER: It starts all over
3 again.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay.

5 MS. PALMER: And at that point
6 if they've lost their identification, if
7 mom has called me or mom has called the
8 District Attorney's Office and we're
9 instructed by the judge to remove that
10 person, they can't go back to that home.
11 The parent, unfortunately, depending on
12 what's going on with that individual,
13 they may have discarded all of their
14 relevant information or they can't find
15 it or the person moves, they're
16 transitional. So, again, the body is
17 released from custody with no means of us
18 or PHMC or anyone being able to help
19 them.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I had a
21 client come in my office, Mr. Chairman,
22 who will remain nameless and came in and
23 said, Please, please, please have someone
24 come and arrest my son. And I have to
25 believe that's one of the most difficult

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2 statements a mother will ever have to
3 make about their child. Because the
4 young man because of issues, mental
5 issues, was going around touching people,
6 and often inappropriately, and some of
7 the adult males in the neighborhood, they
8 understood his condition, but at some
9 point, you know, your wife, your sister,
10 your mother, your daughter becomes the
11 priority over that. But she knew that
12 left untreated, left unaddressed, that --
13 and so I had to call individuals to come
14 and do an assessment. But you shouldn't
15 have to know somebody to get some help,
16 and it just -- so she was trying to
17 prevent her son from getting really hurt.

18 So this is a touchy issue, and
19 we have to put the resources to it so
20 that we can adequately monitor it. If
21 your individual managers have 135
22 individual clients that some of them have
23 to be found, traced down, dealt with,
24 you're not going to average, what, close
25 to five a day, that's not realistic.

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2 MS. PALMER: More than five a
3 day.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: More than
5 five a day.

6 MS. PALMER: Absolutely more.
7 Some of our officers, they will see up to
8 20 people a day. Definitely a day in --
9 and I was the supervisor of the
10 Specialized Courts prior to moving here.
11 Definitely the District Attorney and the
12 Treatment Court, they will see a large
13 number of people in a day.

14 MR. STRYD: Typically for us on
15 a Thursday with Judge Woods Skipper and
16 Mental Health Court, we're going to have
17 120 cases on the list.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: We have to
19 stop being penny wise and pound foolish.
20 At the end of the day, we're going to pay
21 for this, and the proper allocation of
22 resources in the right way may prevent us
23 a pound of foolishness.

24 MS. PALMER: Exactly. If I
25 would add, I couldn't tell you how many

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2 times -- I mean, if my boss were here
3 today, he could tell you how many times
4 he's received a call from Councilwoman
5 Blackwell's office, Councilman Jones'
6 office, Councilman O'Brien's office where
7 a person is calling us saying this person
8 is disrupting the community, what are you
9 going to do, this person has broken out
10 windows, this person is running around
11 naked, this person is any number of
12 things, what are you going to do. And we
13 do not want to take people into custody.
14 I'm sitting here with the District
15 Attorney. That's not our first choice,
16 but often we are left with no other
17 choice. We are left with no other
18 choice. And I've heard testimony today
19 saying the Probation Department wants to.
20 Our goal is to be a cohesive working
21 organization that helps people first, but
22 our primary responsibility is to help the
23 community, to protect the community. We
24 are sworn officers and we are
25 compassionate people, but we need your

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2 help, because we need resources, again,
3 for housing. We need you to help the
4 District Attorney's Office so we can find
5 a way to keep this particular population
6 safe. They're not safe for themselves
7 primarily and they're not safe for the
8 community at all. And when we receive
9 those phone calls, we have to respond.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman.

12 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
13 both very much for your informative
14 testimony and for your dedication to the
15 system.

16 At this time, we would like to
17 reintroduce Mr. Matt Tice, who is the
18 Director of Forensic Liaison Program for
19 Pathways to Housing.

20 (Witness approached witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Mr. Tice,
23 if you can state your name for the record
24 and proceed with your testimony.

25 MR. TICE: Good afternoon,

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2 Chairman O'Brien and Councilman Jones.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

4 My name is Matt Tice. I'm the Clinical

5 Director of Pathways to Housing PA.

6 We're a non-profit organization here in

7 Philadelphia. I'm here as a licensed

8 social worker who has been in the field

9 for the last ten years. Over this time,

10 I've worked with many men and women who

11 have struggled to land on their feet

12 after reentering communities from

13 circumstances like incarceration. Since

14 coming to Pathways to Housing, I've

15 gotten to know and serve an incredibly

16 resilient group of individuals living

17 with severe mental illness who have lived

18 with chronic homelessness due to a wide

19 variety of complications in their lives,

20 including reentry. People come to us

21 with difficult histories, and through a

22 "housing first" model, we offer them

23 their own apartment in locations spread

24 across the City with no other

25 pre-conditions.

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2 The people my agency serves do
3 not generally come directly from prisons.
4 Often instead they are the people who
5 find themselves leaving institutions like
6 prison and not knowing where to turn, how
7 to properly access care, deal with
8 addiction or find adequate housing. Our
9 program participants describe confusing
10 or unsympathetic systems, with long waits
11 that do not seem to thoroughly consider
12 mental illness when they return.

13 Because of a combination of
14 individualized behavioral challenges and
15 outside institutional barriers, they find
16 themselves homeless, and not just for
17 short stints. We exclusively serve
18 chronically homeless individuals. So
19 they need to have been on the street or
20 in and out of shelters for at least a
21 year to qualify for our program. Our job
22 is to help pick up the pieces when it all
23 goes wrong. Many have been outside for
24 decades. We've also seen homelessness
25 and other resulting nuisance crimes

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2 contribute to incarceration. These
3 concerns become deeply engrained issues
4 that our staff later need to work with
5 participants to resolve.

6 We come to you today to ask for
7 your continued support for
8 person-centered holistic care that offers
9 easy and open access to all individuals
10 passing through our jails and prison
11 systems. Foster an environment where
12 reentry is supported by more productive
13 discharges. Often individuals leave
14 jails in the middle of the night and
15 their only option is, if they don't have
16 family to take them in, is to go to
17 street or shelter. This is the first
18 step in a cascade of problems where many
19 feel like they are set up to fail. We
20 need an environment where people are
21 valued both inside and outside of prison
22 walls and transitions between are made as
23 smooth as possible.

24 The exciting thing about this
25 group of people is that we know that they

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2 can get better. I've helped individuals
3 who have spent upwards of 30 years either
4 on the street or in prison move into
5 their own apartment. Through our
6 supportive housing program, we serve the
7 whole person, including medical,
8 therapeutic, and behavioral
9 interventions. We routinely watch them
10 maintain their housing at an unheard of
11 rate of 89 percent retention. They
12 reintegrate with neighbors and
13 communities and connect with family
14 members. For those who want to access
15 drug and alcohol treatment, we help open
16 that door, and for those that are not
17 ready, we continually offer access. We
18 make sure healthcare is easily
19 accessible, user-friendly, and are
20 happily amazed when people's health
21 improves even in light of chronic
22 conditions. We also offer support as our
23 participants reconnect with faith
24 communities and other spiritual
25 endeavors.

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2 Right now Pathways to Housing
3 and Horizon House, as mentioned earlier,
4 are the only programs in the City that
5 utilize full adherence to the housing
6 first model. Other programs are starting
7 to follow suit, but it is a slow, hard
8 climb from graduated models that expect
9 behavioral and psychiatric concerns to be
10 settled before housing is offered. We
11 ask you to support developing initiatives
12 that foster this kind of movement.
13 Philadelphia needs more housing first
14 services.

15 We fully support the Mayor's
16 Office of Reintegration Services and some
17 of the other services that have been
18 mentioned here as great examples of how
19 the City is turning toward preventing
20 reentering individuals from ending up in
21 situations like chronic homelessness, but
22 we need more. With the amount of people
23 who pass through the prison system every
24 year with serious mental illness, we need
25 the voices of our leaders such as

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2 yourselves to champion interventions that
3 are geared towards wholeness, informed by
4 the trauma that so many have experienced,
5 and welcome them right where they are.

6 The flow of individuals into homelessness
7 can be staved off, but it won't happen
8 with quick fixes. It will take the
9 dedication of caring individuals informed
10 by the voices of those on the streets.

11 We thank you for listening to
12 those voices.

13 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you
14 so much, Mr. Tice. Where does your
15 funding come from to provide housing for
16 your program participants?

17 MR. TICE: We get it from
18 wherever we can. We get funding from
19 private donors, from grants, from -- we
20 actually get a good amount of money from
21 the City. We get money from HUD. They
22 subsidize a lot of our housing programs.
23 So we look for any possible option. We
24 also have two large programs working with
25 veterans, and so we get funding through

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2 the Veteran Administration Department as
3 well.

4 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you.
5 You've given us the retention rate for
6 your program. Has this changed at all
7 for individuals with mental health issues
8 involved in the criminal justice system?

9 MR. TICE: So as mentioned
10 before, so I also have a group of service
11 coordinators or case managers that work
12 with a forensic liaison or that they are
13 forensic liaisons, and they're designated
14 individuals to work with that system, and
15 with their help, they have -- they've
16 turned around quite a bit and been able
17 to produce some really great results with
18 this group and this population. And so
19 we've seen some really good results with
20 them.

21 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: And one
22 final question. What kind of support do
23 you think would be useful from this City
24 Council in terms of supporting the
25 housing first model so it can be

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2 implemented more broadly throughout the
3 City?

4 MR. TICE: Well, there's been a
5 lot of programs that have been talked
6 about and kind of housing first is a buzz
7 word right now. I'm hearing that a lot
8 of non-profits, a lot of other
9 organizations are starting to embrace it,
10 but encouraging that as an environment,
11 looking to housing first as a model that
12 really does work and that is actually
13 cheaper than most other models. There's
14 a lot more dignity in empowering people
15 right where they are, allowing them to
16 have a lot more choice, but also it's
17 cheaper, and that's great for the bottom
18 line too.

19 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I want to
20 thank you for your testimony. I don't
21 see Chairman Jones. So is there -- so I
22 will thank you for your testimony and
23 ask, is there anyone else that wishes to
24 testify on this resolution?

25 (No response.)

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2 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Seeing no
3 one else is here to testify regarding
4 Resolution 150131 and there being no
5 further business before this Committee on
6 the Disabled and Special Needs and Public
7 Safety today, the public hearing on
8 Resolution No. 150131 is recessed until
9 the call of the Chair.

10 I want to thank you all very
11 much for your attendance.

12 (Committees on the Disabled and
13 Special Needs and Public Safety concluded
14 at 1:15 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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