

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Star Court: Restorative Justice Success Story

Report Date: **May 10, 2013**

Response by: Marin County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: _____
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: _____,

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered _____ have been implemented.
- Recommendations numbered 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
- Recommendations numbered 2 require further analysis.
- Recommendations numbered 7 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: July 9, 2013

Signed: _____

Number of pages attached 3

Marin County Board of Supervisors
Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report
“Star Court: A Restorative Justice Success Story”
Including Responses from the Adult Mental Health Services Chief, Probation
Department, and Public Defender

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. It is the stated policy of Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) to include family participation in Marin’s public mental health services where permitted by law and the client. We recommend that the STAR Court work with participants’ families to put into practice the policy of the CMHS.**

The Department of Health and Human Services will implement this recommendation when there is agreement from the client. We agree that families should be part of a client’s recovery program, where the client agrees with their participation. This increases the size of an individual’s social support network. In the past year, HHS has implemented several measures to support this effort, including the placement of an individual providing family support at the psychiatric services site; development and implementation of a “family friendly” release of information; and other measures.

- R2. We recommend that STAR Court provide, with the consent of participants, a session of orientation for family members to educate the family about how the STAR Court operates and what its goal are. This need not in any way breach client confidentiality.**

The Department of Health and Human Services will further analyze this recommendation. Over the next six months, the STAR Court Team can review what is currently being done to educate family members about the STAR Court and its goals. Whenever a family member is interested in a client’s participation in STAR, the case managers will make efforts to provide education about the client’s illness as well as the function of STAR and the treatments that the client is likely to receive. The Department of Health and Human Services will begin to develop policy and procedures to address this issue and to implement this orientation if done with client’s approval and confidentiality.

- R3. Prior to graduation, the participant’s family should be advised by the STAR Treatment Team of community resources available to the participants and family members, such as ongoing support groups.**

The Department of Health and Human Services will implement this recommendation with the approval of clients. When clients choose to discharge themselves from the STAR program, a wrap-up visit with a case manager is the standard of care. However, many clients forgo this important meeting, during which clients receive recommendations for follow-up care and invitation to return to STAR program in the future. For those clients who are willing to allow their

parents to attend this wrap-up visit, we will provide recommendations regarding the ongoing recovery of the clients.

- R4. Minorities are underserved in STAR Court. This may be due to cultural factors, distrust of the system, issues of language or reluctance to be labeled mentally ill. We recommend that the Handbook provided to participants be translated into Spanish, and that there be increased outreach and engagement with minority populations by the STAR Treatment Team to broaden the referral base.**

The Department of Health and Human Services will implement this recommendation. We agree that the STAR program must continue to be open to all segments of our community. HHS will coordinate the effort to translate the Handbook into Spanish and expects to implement the translation process in the next few months.

- R5. The STAR Court Team should place more emphasis on the problems that newly graduated participants are likely to encounter post-graduation, beginning in the second or third phase of the program. Participants should be encouraged to access team members even after graduation to reduce the risk of relapse.**

The Department of Health and Human Services will implement this recommendation. The STAR Court Team is already taking steps to address the post-graduate STAR client's continued recovery. Dr. Dikman, the STAR unit manager, emphasizes during clinical team meetings the importance of clients' internalization of the recovery model of the STAR program. He is also working with staff to deemphasize the importance of graduation, and alternatively to emphasize the importance of sustained recovery, self-determination, and self-efficacy to the clientele, especially those most vulnerable clients who often struggle after they graduate. The STAR program is also working on preparing clients in other ways (e.g. vocationally, educationally, housing) for life after STAR court. For instance, Integrated Community Services, the agency contracted by STAR for vocational rehabilitation services, is developing a job-skills group as an essential part of the "curriculum" of the STAR Court, with the goal of increasing work-related, psychosocial skills.

The psychotherapy (i.e., talk therapy) provided to most clients is important for supporting the development of recovery with clients, and Dr. Dikman will work with therapists to make this a more prominent aspect of their treatment. The STAR Court Team will continue to develop other strategies around this idea, including but not limited to: a post-graduation support group, follow-up "check-in" contacts with graduates, opportunities for STAR graduates to mentor current STAR Court clients, and gradual phase out of supervised probation after graduation.

- R6. We recommend that graduates be invited and encouraged to continue participating in the peer-counseling group, which meets after court each week. The inclusion of successful program graduates as speakers, role models and sources of information could provide ongoing structure and peer support after the graduate has moved on.**

The Department of Health and Human Services will implement this recommendation. The Department of Health and Human Services will extend the offer to former and graduating clients immediately to participate in the peer-counseling group.

- R7. We recommend that legal and law enforcement personnel assigned to the STAR Court be kept in place for as much as two years, if feasible, so there is continuity in the STAR Court process for the wellbeing of the participants.**

This recommendation will not be implemented. Given the many competing demands of the District Attorney, Public Defender, and Probation departments it would be nearly impossible to guarantee that staff is kept in place for a two year period. With that said, all departments will do their best to provide as much continuity as possible for the wellbeing of our participants.