



Sedgwick County...
working for you

September 2010

Mentally Ill Jail Population

Who are the mentally ill?

Symptoms of mental illness can vary in intensity among various diagnoses from severe and persistent to more moderate or even mild. Inmates with mental illness in the Sedgwick County Jail are those inmates who have a diagnosable mental illness and who are in need of some form of mental health treatment. Need for treatment is determined by the Sedgwick County Jail's contracting medical provider, Conmed, and/or COMCARE providers. This population includes both those who accept treatment and medication as well as those who refuse.

What does the population with mental illness in the Sedgwick County Jail look like ?

Age

The average inmate in the Sedgwick County jail is 33 years old. This age is also believed to represent the average age of the inmate with mental illness.

Gender

In general, the ratio of mentally ill males to females in the Sedgwick County Jail is about 2.4 to 1.

Offenses

Generally, three-fourths of the offenders in the Sedgwick County Jail are held on felony charges. The remaining quarter of the inmate population are held on misdemeanor charges. Among the inmates with mental illness who were taking psychiatric or mood altering medicines in June 2010, 220 were held on felony charges and 110 on misdemeanor charges.

Number

Among the Sedgwick County Jail population, 47 percent of inmates are believed to fit under the above definition of mental illness because of their status as current or former mental health clients, based on a 2009 sample. Included in the 47% are those inmates prescribed psychiatric or mood altering medications. The average monthly number of inmates receiving such medicines has increased in recent years:

2007 — 295 inmates
2008 — 353 inmates
2009 — 357 inmates
2010 — 363 inmates (Year to Date)

What is Conmed?

Since 2005, Sedgwick County has contracted with a private company, Conmed, to provide physical, mental and dental health care services for individuals in the custody of the sheriff. Individuals who receive care from Conmed are either housed in the main detention facility, out-of-county housing, in the booking process, or are in the first ten days or on job search at the work release program.

What is COMCARE?

COMCARE is the licensed mental health authority for Sedgwick County, providing a wide array of mental health and substance use services to County residents. COMCARE is the safety net for individuals in need of mental health services who cannot afford to obtain them elsewhere in the community. COMCARE is the largest of the 27 Community Mental Health Centers in the State of Kansas.

How does Conmed interact with COMCARE?

Conmed and COMCARE interact at multiple points during the detention process:

- If a new inmate in the booking process reports receiving services through COMCARE, the Conmed nurse on duty will request records from COMCARE including a list of current medications to help maintain continuity of care.
- Conmed and COMCARE also work together during competency evaluations. Conmed may report information about current treatment to the COMCARE evaluator and that information is included in the summary to the court.
- If Conmed identifies an inmate who is a danger to self or others due to their mental illness at the time of their release from jail, the inmate may be transported to COMCARE Crisis Services or an emergency room for further assessment and/or treatment. Sheriff's deputies transport such patients if necessary.
- Frequently, Conmed works with COMCARE's Sedgwick County Offender Assessment Program (SCOAP) program to coordinate a plan for SCOAP participants to continue medication at the time the inmate is released.



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What services and programs for the mentally ill jail population are administered in Sedgwick County?

Services

The primary service provided to inmates with mental illness in Sedgwick County are the health screenings and medication administrations preformed by Conmed.

Programs

There are multiple programs available to the population affected by mental illness in Sedgwick County:

- **Sedgwick County Offender Assessment Program**
SCOAP targets non-violent offenders whose mental illness is at the core of their arresting behavior, and redirects them away from incarceration and into community-based mental health treatment. SCOAP served 137 individuals in June 2010. In 2011, SCOAP has a budget of \$1,457,367.
- **City of Wichita Mental Health Court**
The emphasis of the court is on recovery, thereby enabling the participant to stop cycling through the justice system. Participants are identified through a variety of sources, such as judges, attorneys, law enforcement officers, and jail staff. As of August 2010, Wichita Mental Health Court had 83 active participants. To fund the Mental Health Court Coordinator position, COMCARE received \$57,636 in grant funding through the City of Wichita. Case management services are provided through SCOAP and COMCARE.
- **Crisis Intervention Team**
In collaboration with SCOAP, the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) has been established as a pre-arrest alternative. CIT-trained officers who encounter a person exhibiting signs and symptoms of a mental health disorder are trained to respond appropriately, to refer the individual to local service providers and when possible, direct those individuals to community resources instead of booking them into jail. Nearly 200 law enforcement officers from the Sheriff's Office, City of Wichita, and various small cities throughout Sedgwick County have graduated from the 40-hour training, and an additional class of law enforcement officers will be trained in October 2010.

Are there any other services or programs serving the population with mentally illness in Sedgwick County?

While not developed explicitly for the use of persons affected by mental illness, multiple alternatives to jail incarceration are utilized as appropriate and as space becomes available. Several of the programs regularly serve clients affected by less severe forms of mental illness. These alternatives include:

- Adult Intensive Supervision Program
- City of Wichita Drug Court
- Day Reporting Center
- Pre-Trial Services
- Probation Services
- Sedgwick County Drug Court
- Work Release

More information about these programs can be found online at <http://www.sedgwickcounty.org> and at <http://www.wichita.gov>.

What programs are designed to help reduce recidivism in the jail?

Each of COMCARE's programs that work with the mentally ill population strive to reduce behavior which could lead to incarceration. Since its inception in 2006, SCOAP has continually worked to address the causes of the arresting behavior to ultimately reduce recidivism among mentally ill persons arrested in Sedgwick County. SCOAP works toward this goal using mental health assessments, intensive case management, crisis intervention and medication management. Other programs funded at least in part by Sedgwick County which have been designed to help reduce recidivism include the City of Wichita Mental Health Court and the Drug Courts offered through the City of Wichita and the 18th Judicial District.

For more information, contact:

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