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Criminal Justice Reform Path

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Criminal Justice Reform Path

The issue of men incarcerated due to drug and substance abuse, as well as other mental behaviors, has been a challenge in the United States for a long time. Therefore, since many men are imprisoned with such actions, it causes the criminal justice system to undergo more cost in taking care of them while confined. According to Justice (2000), nearly 560,000 individuals were getting treatment due to mental disorders in state healthcare facilities in 1995. However, currently, less than 55,000 individuals are treated in mental hospitals (Hnatow, 2015). Therefore, the process of reducing the rate of individuals being treated with mental illness has resulted in an overload to emergency departments and jails. Moreover, these men are frequently cycled within the criminal justice system because, according to utexas.edu (n.d), at least over 2.6 million mentally ill and substance abuse individuals are incarcerated in prisons and jails. Surprisingly, people diagnosed with mental disorders are incarcerated due to nonaggressive and victimless delinquencies.

Hnatow (2015), emphasize that at least 40 percent of men with mental disease are associated with law enforcement. Moreover, the same source added that nationally about sixteen percent of individuals are incarcerated for crimes linked to cognitive impedance, illness, or substance abuse. The increase in number of adults being incarcerated due to mental diseases and substance abuse has resulted in congestion in prisons and increased transaction costs. For instance, in 2014, Texas prison stated that they spend 54.89 dollars a day for a single adult. Similarly, parole individuals spend 4.04 dollars, while those in community supervision spend 3.20 dollars within a day (utexas.edu, n.d). However, the cost stated above does not include those under medication because it was noted that those who require medical care spend around ninety-

six to one hundred and four dollars within a day, and those in psychiatric correction institutions spend at least 145 dollars (utexas.edu, n.d).

Due to the intensification of adults incarcerated due to mental diseases and substance abuse behaviors, resulting in increased cost in prisons and jails. The development of the Bexar County Jail Diversion Program that will aid in the reorganization of the process of prison diversion to decrease the rate of individuals being incarcerated due to mental diseases or drug and substance abuse (Hnatow, 2015). Furthermore, the intervention has been created to lessen the unsuitable utilization of emergency department to the mentally retarded and substance abuse behavior individuals. Despite jails being established to deal and control individuals who perform criminal offenses as they wait for judgment, they have been castoff to comprehend and regulate the homeless and mentally ill individuals.

The issue of mental disease is a problem of the community, and therefore, they need to develop community-based solutions. However, several communities have established programs on finding methods of getting nonaggressive criminals out of prison and help them get away to live. Moreover, having such programs in existence and working together with the government will help reduce cost, develop better services to individuals with mental diseases as well as reduce the imprisonment rates (Hnatow, 2015). Nevertheless, the process of changing individuals from incarceration to suitable members of society is not an easy thing; thus, the Bexar County Jail Diversion Program developed different stages that will help them create a diversion. The first stage required them to avert the adults from the criminal justice system before being detained by either screening for mental sickness or providing treatment options. The next step is realizing the mentally disabled individuals in jail and follow up on their release to joining

treatment institutions. Lastly, it is offering necessary mental care and support services to the individuals.

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