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Criminal Justice Reform Path

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Prisons perform a critical role in the criminal justice system, as they are used to confine individuals who pose a threat to others. However, not all individuals deserve to be in the prison and jails, because others have problems with their mental being, and they can get well when given the required help. Texas jails and prisons have been regarded as a place for individuals with mental health problems especially those who have not managed to get appropriate treatment (Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, n.d). Similarly, jails in different counties such as Bexar county and emergency health professionals are working to solve the problem with drug-abusing men incarcerated with mental and behavioral diagnoses.

The Criminal justice system faces significant financial challenges to cater to drug-abusing men incarcerated with mental health behaviors. Considering that the number of incarcerated men being treated in Bexar county prisons have depreciated since 1995. According to Justice (2000), almost five hundred and sixty thousand men were getting treatment due to mental disorders in the State Healthcare facilities. Nevertheless, Hnatow (2015), added that currently, the number of people treated for mental problems in hospitals are less than 55000. Consequently, the emergency department will focus on arresting men with mental and behavioral diagnoses and taking them to jail hence overloading them. Utexus.edu (n.d), has stated that at least more than 2.6 million mentally ill and substance-abusing men are incarcerated in prisons, and they are imprisoned because of nonaggressive and victimless delinquencies.

Moreover, despite the emergency department realizing that the majority of men taken to jails and prisons have mental and behavioral diagnoses, they still push them to be incarcerated regardless of their condition. For example, Hnatow (2015), specified that more than 40% of men with mental problems are related to law enforcement. Also, 16% of men are imprisoned for

crimes such as drug abuse and cognitive impedance. While prisons and jails continue to fill and increase in numbers, more cost is associated with it. Utxas.com (n.d), emphasized that in 2014, Texas prison used \$54.89 for a single man per day. On the other hand, they added that per day parole individuals spend \$4.04 and those in community supervision use \$3.20 per day. Nonetheless, the transactional cost indicated above is exclusive of medication as those who require medication will use about 96-100 dollars per day while the psychiatric corrections facilities use more than \$145.

Increased in transactional cost associated with drug-abusing men incarcerated with mental and behavioral diagnoses has resulted in the development of programs that will help divert them from being taken to jail and be treated. Treatment facilities are exponentially more prepared than prisons to alleviate this population. For example, since they are equipped with resources and knowledge, they will provide active medical references, oversee medicine regimens and commend suitable behavioral plans to deal with long-term requirements. Nevertheless, legislatures and physicians must struggle to execute techniques that will stop the incarceration of these men at that high rate and reduce the cost in prisons.

The individuals detained due to substance abuse and mental health issues belong to Bexar county community. Therefore, involving the community in support of diverting and taking care of them will be essential. Similarly, since the process of making these men be responsible members of society is not an easy job, the criminal justice, community and the local government should come together to ensure it is a success, through providing funds for the program and essential resources such as screening devices and medication.

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