Board of Supervisors Memorandum

October 15, 2013

Justice-Health Collaboration Service Implementation Pilot Project
SEARCH Grant - Data Exchange Contract Amendment

Introduction

On June 4, 2013, the Board of Supervisors accepted a $75,000 grant award from the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics (SEARCH). The termination date in the contract as approved by the Board of Supervisors is August 31, 2013. Because of delays at the federal level, a contract amendment is requested that moves the termination date for this project to June 30, 2014.

Background

On June 14, 2013, the Board of Supervisors accepted a $75,000 grant award from SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, to fund a pilot project to develop a method of electronically exchanging health and justice information among the Arizona Superior Court in Pima County; the Pima County Sheriff's Department; the healthcare vendor at Pima County Adult Detention Complex (PCADC), Conmed Healthcare Management, Inc. (Conmed); and the Regional Behavioral Health Authority, Community Partnership of Southern Arizona (CPSA). Currently critical information is shared on a limited basis across a variety of systems and is generally point-to-point. To date, this approach has largely been fragmented and developed in silos rather than with a consistent, collaborative system wide approach. This pilot will develop a simplified, standardized way of exchanging information across the service continuum to include expanding electronic exchange and broadening the information available to each system partner. Expansion of past and current efforts to promote the sharing of information to span the health and justice boundaries is a natural next step in process improvement and systems integration.

Participating as a SEARCH pilot site will result in the establishment of secure electronic exchange of vital health/behavioral health and justice information that will:

- Assist in significantly shortening the length of time required to identify those eligible for diversion programs such as Alternatives to Incarceration;

- Increase the number of individuals who can be released to the community for treatment through more rapid and accurate identification of individuals booked into PCADC with behavioral health conditions;
- Improve the health and justice information provided to CPSA providers upon release from detention;
- Improve continuity of care for individuals in PCADC without incurring unnecessary costs related to orders for duplicative lab or imaging tests or treatment procedures;
- Improve the quality of information for the management of individuals in the justice system by judges, probation, case managers and others;
- Improve public safety through assistance with pre-release planning and post-release follow-up to assist accessibility and effectiveness of community treatment and supervision; and
- Improve reentry management strategies and success rate, thereby reducing recidivism.

One specific example of the benefit the secure exchange offers is the elimination of approximately 40,000 calls per year. Today, Conmed calls CPSA at each booking to identify if the individual is enrolled or has previous enrollment with CPSA and to obtain key healthcare information for treatment. The SEARCH pilot project will eliminate the need for these calls by electronically transmitting a secure notification to CPSA that there has been a booking at PCADC. The transmitted data will run against the CPSA database and if the individual is or has been enrolled with CPSA the key information will be sent electronically to Conmed and received in the electronic medical record. The electronic exchange will free up a considerable amount of time for Conmed staff enabling them to work on other initiatives such as health insurance verification and at the same time eliminating a manual process which has a higher potential for errors than an automated process.

Another benefit of the exchange is the elimination of paper based sharing of key health information between Conmed and Pretrial Services, a division of the Superior Court. Today if the individual booked consents to sharing key healthcare information with Pretrial Services, Conmed provides a paper copy of the information to Pretrial Services which is then utilized to identify if the individual is eligible for the Alternative to Incarceration program. Through the SEARCH pilot project this information can be shared with Pretrial electronically to more rapidly identify individuals with a mental illness who do not pose a public safety risk and could be treated in the community. This process reduces incarceration of the mentally ill while reducing the overcrowding at PCADC.

Need for Contract Amendment

At the time of the Board's acceptance of the grant award, the County entered into a contract with SEARCH for the implementation of the project. That initial contract (Contract # CTN 14*0067) had a termination date of August 31, 2013. This date was based on SEARCH's contract with the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), which was then under negotiation for extension. Negotiations for extension were delayed and complicated by federal budget restraints and sequestration.

SEARCH has successfully amended its contract with the BJA, extending the term through June 2014. Unfortunately, due to the extended delays in this contract renegotiation and scheduling conflicts for the SEARCH workshop leaders, the work on this initiative was unable to begin before the initial contract termination date. However, SEARCH remained committed to this project and on September 18th and 19th, held a workshop for the initial kickoff of the project. Participants included representatives from Pima County Sheriff's Department, Pima County Health, Pima County Attorney's Office, Superior Court and CPSA. During this workshop flow of business processes and critical data elements were defined and initial discussions occurred regarding policy and security. The group will reconvene again the first week in October.

SEARCH has requested the County amend the termination date in their contract to coincide with their contract with the BJA to complete the project. On September 13, 2013, SEARCH provided County with an amendment extending the contract term. If approved by the Board, the new termination date will be June 30, 2014. The change in termination date from August 31, 2013 to June 30, 2014 is the only modification to the contract.

Recommendation

I recommend that the Board of Supervisors accept the extension of the contract so that staff can continue to work on the development of this unique initiative and collaboration.

Respectfully submitted,

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County Administrator

CHH/JL/cbc – September 30, 2013

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