



TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL JAIL

4099 State Route 559

Mechanicsburg, Ohio 43044

Scott E. Springhetti, Executive Director

Telephone: 937-834-5000 Fax: 937-834-9975

E-mail: sspringhetti@tricojl.com



Mental Health and Drug Addiction

The Tri-County Regional Jail, located in Mechanicsburg, Ohio, serves as the local (county) jail for Champaign, Madison, and Union County. The facility has a rated inmate capacity of 160 inmates, and is established as a Full-Service Jail in the State of Ohio. The facility first began taking inmates in December of 2000 and has continuously operated since that time. Within the last four to five years, the Tri-County Regional Jail has seen a rise in both inmates with mental health conditions and inmates addicted to drugs, specifically heroin. Today's inmate population is dramatically different than the inmate population of the early 2000's.

With mental health services, the on-site mental health clinician sees approximately five to six inmates every day. In 2015, the Tri-County Regional Jail increased its on-site mental health availability from thirty-two (32) hours per week to a minimum of forty (40) hours per week, with additional hours authorized as necessary. The facility has access to Crisis intervention twenty-four (24) hours per day and attempts to work with the Mental Health Boards in each of the three member counties to try and promote the best mental health treatment and care possible. One of the biggest difficulties facing the facility occurs when an inmate is in need of more intensive mental health care. With the aid of on-site mental health staff, crisis intervention specialists, and the mental health boards of each county, inmates in need of more intensive care are often referred to one of the State Mental Health facilities. Often times, placement proves to be difficult, as bed space in those facilities are limited. Mental Health inmates often have to wait for a bed to become available, and while waiting, those inmates may be suicidal, combative, and non-compliant with medications. One such situation took place at the facility in January of 2016. While attempting to gain placement, an inmate assaulted a member of the jail's medical staff. That inmate was determined insane and was not prosecuted. The staff member that was assaulted is no longer working in the facility due to the incident. In that incident, local resources were utilized to their fullest potential, but the proper mental health treatment setting was not available when identified, leading to an extended stay in the jail and ultimately, the assault on a staff member. With the same inmate, court-ordered psychiatric treatment on unrelated criminal charges was determined to be necessary. As with the previous incident, there was a lengthy delay while waiting for adequate bed space in a mental health treatment facility. During that wait, the inmate remained medication compliant and no other serious or critical incidents were documented. Over the last three and one-half years, an average of nineteen (19) percent of inmates entering the Tri-County Regional Jail admit to either being treated or having been treated for mental health conditions. It is estimated that at least another ten (10) percent do not admit to having been treated or currently being treated for mental health conditions.

With drug addiction, the heroin epidemic is extremely apparent with today's inmate population. In the early 2000's, treating inmates for drug withdrawal was uncommon. Today, approximately eleven (11) percent of the inmate population is being treated for opiate withdrawal. Twenty-one (21) percent of the current inmate population has openly admitted to drug use/abuse, and it is estimated that at least another twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) percent abuse opiates, but will not admit to doing so over fears of receiving additional jail time or negatively affecting the outcome of charges they are facing. Beyond the treatment measures that are initiated for combating withdrawals, secondary conditions such as unstable vital signs, abscesses, and other



TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL JAIL

4099 State Route 559

Mechanicsburg, Ohio 43044

Scott E. Springhetti, Executive Director

Telephone: 937-834-5000 Fax: 937-834-9975

E-mail: sspringhetti@tricojl.com



medical conditions resulting from drug use/abuse often result in outside treatment being necessary. The frequency for transporting inmates to medical facilities creates increased costs, as well as increases in the risks for escape and contraband introduction. The opiate addiction and the heroin epidemic has also created a greater risk for the introduction of the drugs into the correctional setting. Several facilities in the State of Ohio have had opioid overdoses and even overdose deaths within the facility. The risk to the inmate conveying the drugs is great, but the introduction into the correctional setting also creates a greater risk for other inmates and the staff members of the facility. With the shift to fentanyl and carfentanil, the mere exposure can result in overdose as evidenced most recently in East Liverpool, Ohio. Measures to try and prevent the introduction of drugs into correctional facilities, such as the body scanner being used by the Tri-County Regional Jail, are expensive but necessary for contraband detection.

Both Mental Health and Drug dependent inmates make up a large portion of the current inmate population of the Tri-County Regional Jail. The additional costs associated with caring for both are much more significant than for a general population inmate. The significance of funding resources that can provide alternatives to incarceration, or additional treatment and care while incarcerated, are extremely important in enabling facilities such as the Tri-County Regional Jail to continue to provide the level of treatment and care necessary for both mental health and drug-dependent inmates.

Tri-County Regional Jail Statistical Information

Mental Health

- 19%: percentage of inmates booked into TCRJ that openly state they receive or have received mental health treatment since 2015;
- 22%: percentage of inmates booked into TCRJ that openly state they receive or have received mental health treatment in 2017;
- 10%: percentage estimate of inmates that do not admit to having or having been treated for mental health disorders;
- 40 hours: on-site mental health service at the TCRJ. Crisis intervention and coordination with local mental health boards also utilized;
- 5-6: number of inmates seen on average each day by on-site mental health services

Drug Use/Abuse

- 16%: percentage of inmates booked into TCRJ that openly state they use/abuse drugs since 2015;
- 21%: percentage of inmates booked into TCRJ that openly state they use/abuse drugs in 2017;
- 9%: percentage of inmates booked into TCRJ that openly state they have previously received drug treatment since 2015;
- 8 days: Average length of stay in the TCRJ in 2017
- 11 days: Average length of stay in the TCRJ from 2015 through 2017
- 20-25%: Estimate of additional percentage of inmates that do not admit, but are suspected of being drug users/abusers.