



Mental Health Service Data Exchange Rider 60, 81st Legislative Session

Rider 60, 81st Texas Legislature, requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to submit a report to the Legislative Budget Board describing efforts to aid in the exchange of information between state agencies pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 614.017.

Overview

In compliance with Chapter 614 of the Health and Safety Code, DSHS requires all 37 Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA) and the NorthSTAR program to match the names of individuals booked into local and county jails, with information maintained by DSHS' mental health database, within 72 hours of the receipt of this information. DSHS, in collaboration with the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments and the Texas Commission on Jails Standards, developed this process to:

1. Serve as a mechanism to ensure continuity of care for individuals with mental illness who are involved with the criminal justice system; and
2. Provide a mechanism for post-booking diversion of individuals with mental illness from the criminal justice system.

During the first three quarters of fiscal year 2010 (i.e., from September 1, 2009 through May 31, 2010), approximately 621,184 individuals booked into local and county jails statewide were checked against the DSHS database. Of these individuals, approximately 139,516 received an "Exact" or a "Found" match with information maintained within the DSHS database. Thus, approximately 22% of individuals booked into local and county jails have a current or past history of state mental health care and may be eligible for continuity of care or diversion from the criminal justice system.

Data Exchange Process

LMHAs and the NorthSTAR program receive via phone, facsimile, or email the names and other identifying information of individuals booked into local and county jails on a daily basis. Once received, the LMHA and the NorthSTAR program prepare an electronic file that is matched against DSHS' mental health database. The DSHS database contains information on individuals that are current or past recipients of state-funded mental health care. Once DSHS receives an electronic file from an LMHA or the NorthSTAR program, a return report is prepared and sent back to the LMHA or the NorthSTAR program. The DSHS report contains detailed information for individuals booked into local and county jails that were matched to information in the DSHS database. The LMHA or the NorthSTAR program must either provide a copy of the DSHS report, or some local compilation of the information contained within that report, to the local or county jail within the required 72-hour time period. This information is used by the LMHAs, the NorthSTAR program and the local and county jails to assist with diverting or providing continuity of care for individuals involved with the criminal justice system who are current or past recipients of state mental health care.

Type of Data Exchanged

Information that is routinely submitted by local and county jails to the LMHAs or the NorthSTAR program includes an individual's name, date of birth, social security number, sex and ethnicity. This information is matched to information maintained in the DSHS database. The DSHS report that is prepared and sent to the LMHAs and the NorthSTAR program includes results based upon how well the information submitted by the local or county jail matches with information maintained by DSHS, as well as information specific to each type of match.

There are three levels of matches that are recorded by DSHS which include:

1. Exact - the information submitted by the local or county jail matches exactly with information maintained in DSHS' mental health database;
2. Found - the information submitted by the local or county jail matches with the information maintained in DSHS' mental health database enough to indicate that this consumer has been registered, but not all information matched; and
3. Maybe - the information submitted by the local or county jail matches with the information maintained in DSHS' mental health database enough to warrant further investigation by a mental health professional.

“Exact” and “Found” matches will contain more detailed information including the individual's name, date of birth, social security number, sex, ethnicity, identification number, principle diagnosis, an LMHA or NorthSTAR program service provider identifier and the dates of most recent service by the LMHA or NorthSTAR program. “Maybe” matches will contain less detailed information including the individual's name, date of birth, social security number, sex, ethnicity, and an LMHA or NorthSTAR program service provider identifier. No information is placed on the return report for individuals booked into local and county jails who do not match with information maintained in the DSHS database.

Data Exchange in the Future

Senate Bill 839, 80th Legislature, amended Chapter 614 of the Health and Safety Code to include the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Bureau of Identification and Records in the data exchange process. DSHS and DPS have developed a real-time identification system for individuals with a current or past history of state mental health care who are arrested and booked into local and county jails. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DSHS and DPS has been executed to support operation of this system. This process allows personnel at local and county jail information system terminals, with access to the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TLETS), to run a real-time match with DSHS' mental health database. The real-time identification system was piloted and determined to work efficiently and effectively by Bluebonnet Trails MHMR Center and the Williamson County Sheriff's Office for a three week period.

DSHS and DPS jointly conducted trainings on the use of this new Continuity of Care Query (CCQ) for authorized users of TLETS in January and February of 2010. Additionally, DSHS, DPS and the Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS) in April 2010 released a memorandum

to all jails and sheriffs regarding the availability of an online training module for use of the CCQ through TLETS.

During fiscal year 2010, 62 of the 254 counties used the CCQ for a total of 69,555 unique queries. The number of counties using the CCQ per month increased sharply during the latter months of the fiscal year, as jails were asked to begin use of this new system by August 31, 2010. In an effort to achieve full compliance (i.e., 254 out of 254 counties) with S.B. 839, DSHS, DPS, and TCJS will release another memorandum that includes a deadline for jails to exclusively use the CCQ through TLETS to conduct mental history checks of inmates upon booking (reference: Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 37, Part 9, Chapter 273, Rule §273.5).