



Date: August 15, 2023
To: Judge Knochelmann, Commissioners Draud, Sewell & Nienaber
From: Jailer Fields
Reference: Request for a Private, Public Partnership to provide a Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programming

In 2015, the Kenton County Detention Center began a Substance Abuse Program. This was in response to the lack of available providers in our community at that time. Today there are several providing this vital service. Substance abuse programming is very fluid, with ever-changing regulations and philosophies. While our staff stays current with strategies to assist, it is becoming more difficult day to day. As grant monies subside, this will continue to be more costly for the county. There are additional concerns with new rules and regulations that are forthcoming and may place additional financial burdens on the Counties' taxpayers to provide MAT (Medically Assisted Treatment). While these outside providers can bill insurance companies (Medicaid), we cannot and I don't believe that is a business the county desires to be in. In the past month, we have lost two (2) of our clinicians to a provider that is paying them \$20,000 more per year for the same duties. We lost our first Director of the program to another provider that doubled his salary. While I am a firm believer in this program, it is not our core function. It is the core function of many other private businesses and we should look at our options. Below I have listed what we see as the benefits of such a partnership.

Summary of Benefits to Kenton County Fiscal Court for Contracting out SAP Program and Building External Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Facility:

1. Specialized Expertise: By contracting out our SAP (Substance Abuse Program) to a licensed independent provider, Kenton County Fiscal Court can leverage the expertise and experience of a dedicated organization focused on mental health and substance use treatment. This ensures that the program is efficiently managed and operated by professionals who are well-versed in evidence-based treatment approaches.
2. Cost Savings: Outsourcing the SAP program allows the county to potentially reduce operational costs. The independent provider may have established networks and economies of scale that can result in cost savings compared to running the program in-house. Additionally, the fiscal court can avoid the expenses associated with recruiting and training staff for the specialized program.



LEADING FROM THE FRONTIER TO THE FUTURE

3. Improved Treatment Outcomes: By partnering with a licensed independent provider, Kenton County can enhance the quality of mental health and substance use treatment services offered at the detention center. These external facilities often have access to a broader range of treatment modalities, innovative therapies, and the latest advancements in the field, which can lead to improved treatment outcomes for inmates.

4. Reduced Burden on Staff: Running a comprehensive mental health and substance use treatment facility within a detention center can be challenging for staff, especially if they are not specialized in these areas. Outsourcing the facility to a licensed provider lightens the burden on existing staff, allowing them to focus on their core responsibilities while leaving the treatment to trained professionals.

5. Enhanced Access to Resources: A licensed independent provider likely has access to a wide array of resources and support networks that the county might not have on its own. This can include partnerships with other healthcare providers, access to research and best practices, and connections to community-based support services.

6. Integrated Approach to Rehabilitation: Partnering with an external mental health and substance use treatment facility enables a more integrated approach to rehabilitation. Inmates can receive holistic care, addressing not only their substance use issues but also underlying mental health concerns, which can lead to more sustainable recovery and reduced rates of recidivism.

7. Positive Public Perception: Investing in external treatment facilities and partnering with licensed providers demonstrates the county's commitment to the well-being and rehabilitation of its inmates. This can lead to a more positive public perception, fostering support from the community and stakeholders for such initiatives.

8. Compliance and Accountability: Contracting with a licensed provider ensures that the SAP program and treatment facility operate within legal and regulatory guidelines. The provider's adherence to industry standards and best practices helps the county maintain a high level of accountability and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Overall, contracting out the SAP program and building an external mental health and substance use treatment facility offers a range of benefits to Kenton County Fiscal Court, including enhanced treatment outcomes, cost efficiencies, and a more comprehensive and integrated approach to inmate rehabilitation.