

# **Bristol County Sheriff's Office now offers inmates Medication Assisted Treatment Program**

"As part of providing better addiction prevention and recovery services in the Bristol County Sheriff's Office (BCSO), starting on November 6, 2023, the Medication Assisted Treatment Program (MAT) expanded. All sentenced male and female inmates who are within 120 days or less of their end of sentence date are now eligible to be considered for the MAT program. Any sentenced inmate who is interested must fill out a MAT/MOUD Induction Request form.

This is a different practice whereby, in the past, at time of admission to the BCSO inmates would need to prove they have a current treatment plan that they were receiving prior to incarceration. This left many inmates without treatment.

On a priority basis it seemed to be most beneficial to focus on sentenced inmates being released into the community either on parole or through their end of sentence date. The goal was to provide the released person the medication and community connections for continuity of care to address their addiction.

In Massachusetts, 19.07% of people reported using illicit drugs in the last month(1). The BCSO estimates that as much as 80% of the inmate population could benefit from substance abuse and/or mental health treatment. Expanding the MAT program is one step in closing that gap.

The tools they receive on site is the medication: either Subutex oral medication, Brixadi injectable form of Subutex, methadone or Vivitrol in addition to the onsite clinical contacts and groups prior to release. The MAT program and BCSO

would work together to connect the individual to a community program in the area in which they will reside in order to continue with treatment and to address continuity of care upon release.

The BCSO ran discharge numbers for 60 days within their end of sentence, and as an example from today's date, twenty three (23) would be eligible for discharge, 90 days there would be 53 inmates and 120 days there are a predicted 80 inmates eligible for discharge. Of course good time and parole can affect those numbers.

Twenty BCSO sentenced inmates were seen today, Tuesday, as of 12 noon for determination of eligibility.

**MAT CLINICIANS EVALUATE ELIGIBILITY BY CONSIDERING:**

1. Past history of opioid use
2. Last use of illicit substances
3. Prior participation in community MAT program
4. What clinic in the community would the inmate choose to connect with if accepted

Additionally, a new post-post release unit has been set up where one of the core functions of the post-release unit is ensure that before inmates leave the BCSO, inmates have medical care arranged for life outside of the BCSO. Medical care includes substance abuse treatment and mental health. This means that if an inmate is receiving medical care while locked up, they can continue to receive medical care after release so there is no break in the care; there is a continuity of care. This will help reduce recidivism.

Any additional questions can be referred to Judy Borges ext. 2397, Mark Dagnall ext. 2175 or Shannon Gomes ext. 2640."- Bristol County Sheriff's Office.