

# Transformation Transfer Initiative Final Report: Washington, D.C.



Interview conducted on: May 25, 2021

Interviewee: Chad Tillbrook, Ph.D., Director, Forensic Services Division, Department of Behavioral Health, Washington, D.C.

1. *When did you launch your 2020 TTI, and how long has it been operational?*

We were not able to launch the project before the pandemic and no work has been conducted on the project.

2. *How has COVID-19 impacted your project? What adaptive practices or efforts have aided you in overcoming these challenges?*

The plan that was outlined in our initial project proposal is still in play. We still feel strongly that paid incentives are a key missing component in the District of Columbia.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) has had a medical stay-in-place in effect since March 2020. Only DOC personnel are permitted inside the institution (my co-located DBH staff are not even allowed in) and the DOC residents/inmates are not permitted to move about in the institution. We have considered multiple alternatives to get our TTI project off the ground. Simply put, we cannot do so without meaningful and reliable contact with the DOC residents.

Much of D.C. government will be returning to a part-time, in-office presence in mid-July. My staff and I, however, do not know whether DOC will be included in this re-opening plan. If DOC does permit outside agencies to go into the building in July, we will begin our TTI project. To set expectations, we anticipate it will be at least two months after that before the peer specialists have their first contact with any DOC resident, and that is if everything goes like clockwork.

3. *How many individuals have participated in your TTI at time of this interview?*

0

4. *How much has been paid in incentives at time of this interview?*

0

5. *Have there been changes to your key partners and/or target population?*

There have been no changes.

6. *Do you plan to make incentives a part of your behavioral health system moving forward? If so, how will you achieve sustainability?*

The beauty of this project was that it was a pilot to see if incentives do work in the District. There may turn out to be reasons that they do not, but I remain hopeful that they will work and that they are something the District will embrace. In the opioid reduction world and the SUD world they are doing something similar to this. This project is different in that it targets people with SMIs, but there is hope that it will be helpful. There is an appetite in the District for something like this, and people are eager to see the results of this pilot project.

7. *Do you have any meaningful anecdotes regarding your programs that you can relay to us? (I.e., testimonials from participants, creative solutions)*

We do not have any meaningful anecdotes. I think NASMHPD has been incredibly patient with us and with other jurisdictions who have also struggled in their own ways. Once we get the greenlight to go back in, there will be other challenges including making sure that we are hiring the right individuals. It is indeed challenging; we want to target individuals with lived experience who are familiar with the criminal justice system, but at the same time they need to pass background checks in order to actually enter the jail and go through orientation. That said, we have a large pool to choose from, and a lot of people are interested in serving as peer specialists.

8. *Do you see the incentives working to help individuals make follow-up appointments?*

Since we have not been able to start our project, it is too soon to answer this question.

9. *What has this federal investment given your state system that would not have happened without it?*

We would not have even entertained this pilot project if not for this opportunity. Trying to sell an unproven or untested project at \$150,000, and hiring two part-time temporary peer specialists would not have happened.

10. *What will you do with any residual funds?*

We do not anticipate having any residual funds. Given the rate of people being released from the D.C. jail who have an SMI, we expect these funds to last many years. Hopefully, during that time, we will be able to test this project, make revisions to its implementation, and make a proposal to do this same work consistently beyond this pilot phase.