

09/23/21

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I submit the following ideas in advance of tomorrow's meeting:

- 1) **Provide funding to the courts for IST evaluators.** Each court pays for IST evaluators through their general funds and courts do not have a separate line item for these costs. At the same time, the number of IST evaluations increase each year, and courts may have deal with additional local challenges that impacts its ability to maintain a sufficient pool of evaluators. Such challenges may include finding qualified and available evaluators, paying higher evaluation costs – particularly in rural counties - in the event that evaluators must travel long distances to conduct evaluation, etc. Providing funding for evaluators through a specific line in the trial court budget can better assist courts in contracting with evaluators who are well qualified and more likely to provide quality competency evaluations. Metrics to track for this recommendation: The number of evaluations provided through this funding. The number of unduplicated evaluators contracted through this funding
- 2) **Training modules or toolkits for evaluators.** Taking into consideration the working group presentations regarding training models used in other states, as well as the recently instituted DSH regulations for alienists, a potential solution may involve leveraging training modules used in other jurisdictions, or the training materials created for DSH evaluators, to train existing evaluators. Understandably these trainings may take place over time, but consideration could be made into rolling them out/making them available in increments and measuring whether they are creating short-term improvements in the quality of evaluations. Training agencies such as the California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS) and Forensic Mental Health Association of California (FMHAC) may also have resources that could be leveraged. Funding for this would include the cost to develop and provide trainings. Metrics to track for this recommendation: the number of people trained; qualitative post-training surveys to training participants; testing a sample of evaluations submitted by evaluators who underwent these trainings to determine whether the quality of evaluations have improved.
- 3) **Focus on reducing the number of cases raising to the need for felony IST evaluations through front-end efforts.** This may include training for defense attorneys or other legal professionals to better understand the competency process and to reduce the assumption that IST evaluations are an entryway to treatment, and offered for continuing legal education credit. Agencies such as DSH, CCJBH, the California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS), California Lawyers association (CLA), American Bar Association (ABA), or Forensic Mental Health Association of California (FMHAC) may have such trainings available. Funding for this would include the cost to develop and provide trainings. Metrics to track for this recommendation: number of people trained, number IST evaluations required post training.