

## ***CORRECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RE-ENTRY USING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY***

Recent studies have shown that as many as 67% of offenders with mental illness will be re-incarcerated within six months after release from prison if given no adequate aftercare services. In fiscal year 2007, DOC discharged approximately 8000 offenders to either probation/parole supervision or directly to the street without supervision. Based on the mental health levels classification system, it is estimated that approximately 1000 of those 8000 discharged have a mental illness that would reduce their successful reentry into the community if not given proper services.

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) have worked to improve the transition of incarcerated offenders with serious mental illness into appropriate community based mental health services. Beginning February 2007, "Integrated Services Discharge Managers," who are ODMHSAS employees, function out of offices located on the mental health units at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center, Joseph Harp Correctional Center and Oklahoma State Penitentiary. A total of 443 offenders housed at Department of Corrections facilities have participated in specialized discharge planning from February 07 to February 2010. The ultimate goal of the program is the recovery of the offender/consumer and a comprehensive discharge plan that is designed specifically to best meet the needs and goals of each individual offender.

One primary referral resource for mental health re-entry is the Re-entry Intensive Care Coordination Teams (RICCT) at contracted mental health centers in Tulsa and Oklahoma Counties. The teams are an extension and key component of the intensive discharge planning process for offenders with serious mental health and substance abuse needs. The screening and engagement process begins approximately 6 to 12 months from their projected date of release. The outreach visits that occur in the correctional facilities prior to release are found to be one of the largest precipitators for successful transition from prison to RICCT services in the community. The Transformation Grant has provided new technology that now permits RICCT staff, offenders and Discharge Managers to conduct subsequent outreach visits with offenders in the prisons prior to release. This initiative has resulted in tremendous savings of time, money and travel.