

QRT Program

Paul Dobson, Wood County Prosecuting Attorney

The Wood County Prosecuting Attorney's Office will be developing a unit replicating a "Quick Response Team" (QRT). In such, the establishment of a Drug Abuse and Addiction Response Coordinator (DAARC) position within the prosecutor's office will occur. Additionally, The Wood County Sheriff's Office will assign a full-time deputy to the QRT. It is hoped that other law enforcement agencies around the county will be willing to provide some part-time assistance to the QRT as well. This unit will respond to notification of a drug overdose or other significant drug-related incident. The DAARC will coordinate the response by the deputy. The deputy will respond to the survivor's location. He or she will engage with the survivor and, if possible, the survivor's family and encourage the survivor to be evaluated and enter, as necessary, detoxification, in-patient treatment, or counseling. The deputy will also engage with the family to provide access to, and encourage them to seek, services that can help them deal with the survivor's drug habit or addiction and the emotional fallout therefrom. On-going support will be provided by the QRT unit.

Should the deputy be successful in convincing the survivor to participate in an evaluation, he or she will contact the DAARC, who will contact a behavioral health agency collaborator and arrange for an assessment within the shortest appropriate time period. The DAARC will take the necessary steps that may be needed to secure a bed in a detoxification unit or other appropriate facilities for the survivor. In addition, the deputy and the coordinator will collectively determine whether there are other needs of the survivor or the survivor's family and begin the process of addressing those needs. The deputy will have the survivor sign a release of information to the QRT, so his or her progress can be checked. If necessary, the deputy will transport the survivor to the assessment facility and ensure that the survivor is in proper care. Once the survivor is located in a secure placement, the deputy will disengage and return to duty. The DAARC will follow up with the facility in which the survivor has been placed in order to determine the survivor's status and whether or not he or she is continuing with care. The DAARC will provide whatever assistance or information is necessary and appropriate to the facility so as to keep the survivor in a continuum of care. Through the creation of a relationship between the QRT and the survivor, it is hoped that intelligence will be collected relative to other criminal conduct.

Balance of 4-Tiered Program

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Regarding the DAARC, the QRT unit will be one aspect of the position's larger duties. The DAARC will be responsible to evaluate and either establish, restructure, or strengthen three other programs.

The DAARC will establish, supervise, and coordinate a Prosecutor's Pre-Trial Diversion Program for drug-related criminal cases. Eligible defendants, after being charged with a criminal act, will have the option of entering into and completing a standardized, evidence-based program. Successful completion will result in dismissal of charges while failure will result in case prosecution.

The DARC will evaluate Wood County's current implementation of Intervention in Lieu of Conviction (ILC) as that system is established under ORC 2952.041. The judges of the Wood County Court of Common Pleas regularly use this statute in order to encourage criminal defendants to seek treatment. Wood County currently maintains no statistics on the success or failure rates of this system. The DAARC will establish criteria to measure success, research shortcomings in the current system and make recommendations for the improvement of the ILC system in Wood County. The DAARC will then collaborate with the adult probation department to implement any changes accepted and continue to monitor the success rates of the system on an on-going basis.

Finally, the DAARC will establish, in conjunction with common pleas court judges, a docket specifically for eligible drug offenders with programming especially addressing drug rehabilitation. Many of these defendants will be convicted of charges and will voluntarily enter a systemically standardized program. The DAARC will monitor and manage the progress of offenders through the drug docket program in coordination with the drug docket judge and other stakeholders, including the probation department. The DAARC will establish and maintain success criteria, evaluate the program, investigate other options, and offer recommendations for changes to the program as a means of increasing effectiveness.

This "four-tiered approach" is intended to meet drug dependent individuals at the many points at which they may enter the criminal justice system. The four-tiered approach permits a fluidity of response providing many options for police, prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges to explore the best program or system for the right individuals.