Kern County Virtual MET Program

Presentation To:

17th Annual National Behavioral Health Information Management Conference & Exposition
April 26 - 27, 2017
Carlsbad, CA

“Extending the connectivity to EHRs beyond the desktop via mobile and web based technologies”
Kern County Virtual MET Program

Presenters:

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Kern County Virtual MET Program

Q: What Is Virtual MET?

A: The delivery of Mobile Evaluation Team (MET) services *remotely*, via a HIPAA-secure *Skype-like* application using *iPads*. 
Kern County Virtual MET Program

• Face-to-Face MET was launched in Kern in 1998.
  – MET responds at the request of Law Enforcement.
  – Serves everyone in Kern regardless of ability to pay.
  – 7 days per week, 365 days per year, from 0700 - 0030

• In **FY2015-16, MET responded 2,744 times** to Law Enforcement requests for assistance
  – **651** responses resulted in **W&I Code 5150 Involuntary Holds**.

• Kern County spans 8,163 sq. mi. with a population of over 880,000
  – 98% of MET responses were to Metro Bakersfield in 2016.

• **Expanded to Virtual MET services in 2016.**
Kern County Virtual MET Program

Virtual MET is a key component of several Kern initiatives:

– Stepping Up (diversion to treatment program)
– Crisis Intervention Team
– Mental Health Court
– New CHFFA Grant Funded Ridgecrest CSU
In 2016, Kern BHRS applied for and was awarded an SB82 Investment in Mental Health Wellness grant for $30,200 from the CA Health Facilities Financing Authority (CHFFA) to pilot Virtual MET in Eastern Kern.

- CIT partners supported the grant application through collaboration, sharing of data, and provision of letters of support.

- In 2016, KCSO volunteered to pilot Virtual MET with Kern BHRS.
Kern County Virtual MET Program

The CHFFA grant provides funds for:

• **25 iPads** for use by officers in the field and by MET.
• 2 cellular modems (Cradlepoint) to improve cellular connectivity in Kern River Valley and Frazier Park. These cellular modems will be installed on two KCSO vehicles.
• Mobile connectivity service (AT&T/Verizon Wireless).
• Accessories such as protective cases with keyboards and an in-vehicle mounting device for the iPad.
Kern County Virtual MET Program

- Launched **November 2016** in 2 rural locations.
- Uses a **HIPAA-compliant** internet-based videoconferencing application, **“Zoom.”**
- Feedback from Officers and MET staff (via survey) is positive:
  - Easy to use
  - Consumers respond well
  - Saves Officers time related to transports to PEC
  - Determines need for W&IC 5150 Involuntary Hold or NOT.
- Expansion began in January to more rural locations.
- **Available for rollout to all Kern Law Enforcement** outside of Metro Bakersfield.
Feedback From Law Enforcement

• Both Law Enforcement and MET Staff are asked to complete an online survey after a Virtual MET session.

• Of the Law Enforcement survey respondents:
  • 100% indicate that they are “Extremely Willing” or “Very Willing” to use Virtual MET again.
  • 100% indicate that they are “Extremely Likely” or “Very Likely” to recommend Virtual MET to other Officers.

• Of responses from both Law Enforcement and MET combined:
  • 100% indicate that Virtual MET successfully de-escalated the consumer.
  • 75% indicate that Virtual MET linked the consumer to follow-up behavioral health services.
  • 25% indicate that Virtual MET determined that there was a need for a W&I Code 5150 Involuntary Hold.
Lessons Learned

• Positive Reception By Clients
• iPads Easy To Use and Reliable
• Keep the Survey Simple and User Friendly
• Set expectations that Virtual MET availability may not be instantaneous but will still be an improvement
• Manage the human element of staff adjusting to a Virtual service
• Technology and Connectivity Learning Curve
Kern County Virtual MET Demonstration
QUESTIONS
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Kern County Virtual MET Program

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