

Kern County Virtual MET Program

Presentation To:

17th Annual National

Behavioral Health Information Management Conference & Exposition

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Carlsbad, CA

**“Extending the connectivity to EHRs beyond the desktop
via mobile and web based technologies”**



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Kern County Virtual MET Program

Presenters:

- **Robin Goodell**, Crisis Services Administrator, Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (Kern BHRS)
- **Lt. Michael Deleon**, Northeast Area Substations, Kern County Sheriff's Office (KCSO)





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





Kern County Virtual MET Program

- 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



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QUESTIONS ?



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