

Workshop #27
FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2009 – Session 6 (2:45-4:15)

SEX OFFENDER ASSESSMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Presenter

- Gregg A. Belle, Ph.D., Director of Sex Offender Evaluation Services
Forensic Health Services, Inc.
- Jennifer Deitsch, BA
Forensic Health Services, Inc.

Audience

Topic pertains to adults

Level

Intermediate

Workshop Summary

This workshop will provide an overview of the Massachusetts civil commitment process of Sexually Dangerous Persons (SDP) and will include a synopsis of the sex offender risk assessment process involved in making such a determination. Initially in October 2000 and again in July 2006, Forensic Health Services, Inc. (FHS) was awarded the contract with the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) to provide sex offender evaluations at the Massachusetts Treatment Center (MTC). The MTC is a DOC facility that serves as the Commonwealth's only dedicated sex offender treatment institution. The mission of the MTC is to promote public safety through the responsible management of criminal and civil commitments while providing a comprehensive and effective sex offender treatment program. FHS has provided the DOC with a pool of specially trained psychologists designated as Qualified Examiners (QE) and independent consultants to the Community Access Board (CAB) for the purpose of evaluating those individuals committed under the SDP statute. These QEs also evaluate individuals temporarily committed to the MTC following a finding of probable cause that an individual may be a SDP. In fiscal year 2008, FHS' QEs and CAB members completed over 430 evaluations. FHS has worked in partnership with the DOC to create a forensic assessment program that has met and continues to meet the expanding need for best practices and high quality evaluations of sex offender risk within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This workshop will also discuss the challenges in maintaining a strong partnership with DOC in financially demanding times.

Learning Objectives

1. To become familiar with the Massachusetts civil commitment process of Sexually Dangerous Persons (SDP).
2. To understand the functions of a Qualified Examiner (QE).
3. To understand the functions of the Community Access Board (CAB).
4. To become familiar with the role Forensic Health Services (FHS) has with the QE and CAB programs.
5. To become familiar with some of the challenges of working in partnership with the Department of Correction