

Psychiatric Security Review Board

At a Glance

Executive Director: Ellen Lachance, MSW

Established: 1985

Statutory Authority: Connecticut General Statutes,
Section 17a-580 - 17a-603 inclusive

Central Office: 505 Hudson Street, First Floor,
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Number of Employees: 3

Recurring Operating Expenses: \$296,512

Organizational Structure: One Administrative Unit

Mission

To protect the safety of Connecticut citizens and certain individuals by ordering appropriate treatment, confinement or conditional release of persons accused of crimes but found not guilty by reason of mental disease or mental defect.

Statutory Responsibility

The Psychiatric Security Review Board (the “Board”), determines the level of confinement and treatment, for those individuals found not guilty of a crime by reason of mental disease or defect, necessary to protect society. Acquittes are committed to the Board by the Superior Court. The Board orders confinement to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services or to the Department of Developmental Services and orders the appropriate level of supervision and treatment. The Board also determines the conditions under which an acquittee may be released into the community. The Board orders confinement in a maximum-security facility, approves temporary leave from a hospital setting, grants conditional release into the community and provides recommendations to the Superior Court in the matters of discharge from the Board and continued commitment to the Board’s jurisdiction.

Public Service

The general public is the beneficiary of the agency's work. During fiscal year 2017-2018, there were 6 dispositions that resulted in commitments to the Board by Superior Court and 7 individuals had their commitment terms extended by the court. During this fiscal year, the commitment term for 3 individuals expired, 2 individuals were discharged by the court prior to the end of their commitment and 1 individual died while on Conditional Release status.

As of June 30, 2018, 150 individuals remained under the Board's jurisdiction. Of the 150 individuals, 30 were ordered confined in maximum-security at the Whiting Forensic Hospital; 84 individuals were ordered confined in a non-maximum-security setting at the Whiting Forensic Hospital; 4 individuals were confined at Connecticut Valley Hospital; and 29 individuals held Conditional Release status. In addition, 1 acquittee remained in federal custody serving a concomitant sentence with his Board commitment, 1 acquittee was confined to the Department of Correction on sentenced status and 1 acquittee has remained on AWOL status since June 1991.

During this fiscal year, the Board held 122 hearings and 9 Board Conferences, resulting in 112 Memoranda of Decision and 15 Reports to Court regarding the matters of Continued Commitment and Discharge from the jurisdiction of the Board.

There were no arrests of individuals on Conditional Release status while under the Board's jurisdiction during this fiscal year.

Improvements/Achievements 2017-2018

- Hassan Minhas, M.D., was appointed as the psychiatrist member, replacing Justin Schechter, M.D. following his relocation out of state
- The Executive Director, on behalf of the Board, testified regarding Senate bills 294 and 512 relative to proposed changes to the Board's statutes
- Met with representatives of the Chief Public Defender's Office, Chief State's Attorney's Office, and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to discuss potential legislative proposals
- Maintained zero percent criminal recidivism of conditionally released acquittees, as reflected by no criminal convictions
- Apprised the public of all Board hearings and conferences via timely posting of information to agency website
- Conducted agency procedures as required by law within statutorily mandated timeframes
- Updated statistical information related to acquittee confinement and movement into the community
- Maintained regularly scheduled meetings with the administration of Connecticut Valley Hospital and Whiting Forensic Hospital to improve collaboration and address system issues
- Facilitated regularly scheduled community provider meetings with the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services regarding conditionally released acquittees
- Conducted bimonthly Psychiatric Security Review Board trainings in partnership with the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services and provided on-site statewide training to a variety of community providers

Strategic Planning/Business Planning

The Board's strategic plan includes:

- Collaboration with the Office of Attorney General, relevant state agencies and the Board's Legislative Liaison to implement modifications and additions to the Board's statutes, as needed.
- Continued partnership with other state agencies to ensure collaboration and communication among the various stakeholders
- Cross-training of agency employees to effectively manage continuity of operations
- Collaborative planning with the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services and the Department of Developmental Services to address service systems issues and best practice protocols
- Maintain outreach to community agencies and the public regarding the Board's mission of public safety
- Update agency Continuity of Operations Plan

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

The Board members, as of June 30, 2018, were Sheila Hennessey, Esq., Chairperson, Cheryl Abrams, M.S. (expert in parole/probation), Susan Blair, M.S., L.P.C. (member with victim advocacy experience), Sylvia Cancela, M.B.A. (member of the general public), Mark Kirschner, Ph.D. (psychologist), Hassan Minhas, M.D., (psychiatrist member). The Board is assisted by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services in meeting the Affirmative Action requirements of the statute and follows such regulations of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.