



# Behavioral Health Justice Center (BHJC)

**64%** of jail inmates across the country have mental health problems

**35-40%** of individuals detained in SF county Jail receive care from Jail Behavioral Health Services

**120** days average wait time for a mental health bed through Behavioral Health Court (BHC)

## The Concept Paper

In 2016, District Attorney Gascón and four experts in the field of mental health released a concept paper titled, "[Justice That Heals: Promoting Behavioral Health, Safeguarding the Public, and Ending Our Overreliance on Jails.](#)" proposing the development of a new Behavioral Health Justice Center (BHJC).

The proposed BHJC is a collaborative, independently administered, interagency center designed to 1) bridge the current divide between the criminal justice system and community-based treatment programs for mentally ill individuals, and 2) ensure diversion at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Why BHJC ?

Research shows that incarcerating people with mental illness undermines long-term community safety by increasing recidivism. The concept paper for BHJC outlines a series of recommendations to create a continuum of mental health care services in a centralized service center. It would provide, for the first time, a purposeful, coordinated system of care with different levels of service and appropriate treatment options for individuals with mental illness in the justice system.

The co-location of these services will enhance public safety by promoting a seamless system of care for individuals with mental illness to interrupt the cycle of homelessness, addiction, and criminal activity.

## 4 Tiers of BHJC

The BHJC would have four tiers of service and treatment to address four distinct levels of need:

**Level 1: Emergency Mental Health Reception Center and Respite Beds.** A 24-hour venue for police to bring individuals experiencing a mental health episode for an initial mental health assessment.

**Level 2: Short-term (2-3 week) Transitional Housing and on-site residential treatment.**

**Level 3: Long-term Residential Dual Diagnosis Treatment.** Longer-term intensive residential psychiatric care and substance abuse treatment in an unlocked setting.

**Level 4: Secure Inpatient Transitional Care Unit.** Short-term, voluntary inpatient treatment for persons with mental illness transitioning to community-based residential treatment programs.

For more information, please contact Chief of Alternative Programs & Initiatives, Katherine Miller, at [katherine.miller@sfgov.org](mailto:katherine.miller@sfgov.org)