

Prosecution and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Services (PLEADS)

May 2019

San Diego County Adult / Older Adult System of Care provides contracted sobering services for individuals within San Diego County referred by local law enforcement agencies in lieu of arrest and provides safe sobering services, engagement, referral, linkage and transportation to recovery treatment programs for intoxicated adults (age eighteen (18) and older) referred by health, safety, and law enforcement agencies.

Inebriated and intoxicated individuals often pose health and safety problems to themselves as well as to the general public. Incarcerating inebriated individuals whose only criminal behavior is public intoxication diverts health, safety, and law enforcement resources from more serious or life-threatening situations.

In collaboration with the City of San Diego's Police Department (SDPD), the County of San Diego's Behavioral Health Services (BHS) division offers Inebriate Sobering Services to provide countywide diversion, non-residential, non-medical, sobering services in a drug and alcohol-free environment for public inebriates or intoxicated individuals dropped off by health, safety, and law enforcement agencies. Inebriate Sobering Services is open twenty-four (24) hours a day seven (7) days a week for individuals age eighteen (18) or older who do not require a higher level of care for the management of their inebriation or intoxication episode and can safely receive sobering services.

When appropriate, the engaged public inebriate or intoxicated individual is offered the opportunity to stay at Inebriate Sobering Services with inebriated individuals remaining a minimum of four (4) hours in lieu of being incarcerated. Services are provided in a clean, safe environment for inebriates to allow the effects of alcohol, marijuana or other intoxicants to subside and allow the individual time to regain minimal levels of functionality. Once the inebriated or intoxicated individual reaches a sober state, staff offer substance use counseling services. Individuals are provided information to afford an increased awareness in understanding his/her alcohol and/or drug related problems and are linked (including initial transportation) to services when appropriate. Information/literature is also provided to each individual about substance use and available substance use treatment programs.

PLEADS

Prosecution and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Services is modeled after LEADS which is a nation-wide set of programs in which police officers exercise discretionary

authority at point of contact to divert individuals to a community-based, harm-reduction intervention for law violations driven by unmet behavioral health needs. In lieu of the normal criminal justice system cycle -- booking, detention, prosecution, conviction, incarceration -- individuals are instead referred into a trauma-informed intensive program where the individual receives a wide range of support services, often including transitional and permanent housing and/or drug treatment. Prosecutors and police officers work closely with programs to ensure that contacts with participants going forward, including new criminal prosecutions for other offenses, are coordinated so the participants maximize the opportunity to achieve behavioral change.

More information on law enforcement assisted diversion services may be found at: <https://www.leadbureau.org/about-lead>