

SFI Study Committee Recommendations Based on Draft Report

Committee asked to assess the “designated population”: Those Vermont residents regardless of whether they are in the custody of the Commissioner of Corrections, with mental and functional impairments or developmental disorders so severe that they cannot live in the community without substantial supports and who have committed, been charged with, or have been identified as being at risk of committing a criminal offense that renders them a threat to public safety or who pose a risk to their own physical safety, or both.

During its review, the Committee specifically focused on:

- Ensuring that members of the designated population received the most appropriate treatment in the most appropriate setting;
- Ensuring public safety;
- Protecting the legal rights of members of the designated population; and
- Managing the designated population within its current appropriations.

The Committee recommends:

- a legislative amendment specifying that use of an SFI designation end once an inmate leaves a correctional facility;
- that the best available risk assessment tool that includes both static and dynamic factors be used consistently throughout the Agency of Human Services and across all geographic regions of the State to analyze the functionality, public safety, and criminogenic risks among members of the designated population;
- that the Agency of Human Services conduct an assessment of the designated agencies to ensure that all counties are equipped with appropriately trained staff and risk management tools to provide the highest possible level of services to members of the designated population who live in the community, including those who present with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse issues;
- statewide implementation of the Sequential Intercept Model, which identifies five interception points in the criminal justice process—from arrest through community reentry—which provide opportunities to divert offenders from incarceration to treatment services and other supports;
- that the committees of jurisdiction explore ways to consistently and uniformly implement the adult treatment court programs statewide, including the development of regional or mobile treatment court programs;
- that DoC contract with local health care providers versus maintaining its existing relationship with an out-of-state corporation, because so doing will ensure greater continuity throughout the system and foster more effective discharge planning;
- that the standing committees of jurisdiction analyze the design and constraints of TBI services to determine whether funding opportunities for this group may be expanded;
- that the standing committees of jurisdiction and the Corrections Oversight Committee assess the need for a separate facility or unit of an existing correctional facility for forensics purposes.