

## **CALLER OR FAMILY MEMBER IS DEALING WITH A CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUE**

It is important that both the jail and the defendant's attorney are aware that there is a mental health issue.

Many family members find comfort in knowing that the Duval County Jail does its best to meet the needs of people with mental illnesses.

The Duval County jail has a psychiatrist on staff and will provide medications. If the person is on a very expensive medication, he or she might be prescribed a medication that is less expensive.

The Duval County Jail Mental Health Coordinator is Darlene Little, 904-630-5826. She is based at the jail and her job is to see that people with severe mental health problems get their needs met.

There is a Mental Health Unit in the jail. Not everyone with a mental health problem is placed in the unit. Usually people who are showing severe symptoms are most likely to be placed in this unit. If a person was not identified with a mental health issue and was placed with the general population and doing fine, most likely her/she will stay in general population. Not everyone wants to be placed in the Mental Health Unit, and for some people being in this unit can create additional stress; others find it a safer environment.

People who remain in jail for more than 30 days risk losing their benefits.

Mental Health Court is for people who are charged with misdemeanors only—no felonies or DWIs. Sentences may take longer in Mental Health Court, but treatment is a consideration. There may be more requirements to meet than probation but much better understanding of mental illness is found in Mental Health Court than with probation. People who do not comply with treatment may be placed in jail, but this is unusual. Usually it takes a year to complete the program.