

ODCA Office of the District of Columbia Auditor

June 16, 2020

The Hon. Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia
The John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

We write to let you know that in the next several weeks ODCA will release a report on substance-abuse disorder services (SUDS) that the District provides to those in the justice system written by the Council for Court Excellence.

This comprehensive evaluation will recommend an increase in funding for the Department of Behavioral Health's (DBH) pre-arrest diversion (PAD) program, now operated through DBH's Community Response Team, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) and Department of Human Services, and called for in the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results Act.

The report's review of the PAD pilot program concludes that MPD needs significantly more training for law enforcement officers to be effective partners in the PAD program. We mention this provision in our upcoming report in the context of the D.C. Council's consideration of the District Fiscal Year 2021 budget and the Council's ongoing commitment to pursuing public health approaches to prevent violence and reduce incarceration. The report states that, "to move the program beyond the pilot phase, the D.C. Council must ensure sufficient funding for all PAD partners to train and engage sufficient staff to participate in the program."

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Kathy Patterson
D.C. Auditor



Misty Thomas, Esq.
Executive Director, CCE

cc: D.C. Councilmembers
Officers of the D.C. Council