

# TASC

of the capital district, inc.

251 River Street, Suite 302  
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## Testimony

### **Governor's Executive Budget 2020-2021: Public Protection February 12, 2020**

### **Jessica Song, Executive Director of Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) of the Capital District, Inc.**

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Senate Finance Committee Chair Krueger, Assembly Ways and Means Chair Weinstein, Senate Codes Chair Bailey, Senate Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Chair Sepulveda, Assembly Codes Chair Lentol, Assembly Correction Chair Weprin, and distinguished members of the Legislature:

Thank you for inviting me today. My name is Jessica Song, Executive Director of Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) of the Capital District, Inc.

Coordination of court, treatment and social services requires a specialized combination of expertise with justice stakeholders as well as with the substance abuse, mental health and social services communities. In the Capital District, TASC has been providing court-based case management services as an alternative to incarceration (ATI) program since 1984.

Akin to resource coordinators in specialty courts, TASC is uniquely able to provide case management services to any criminal justice stakeholder in the Capital District (including judges, defense attorneys, prosecution, probation and parole) seeking alternatives to incarceration (ATI) or reentry services for specialized populations.

Justice stakeholders refer defendants to TASC – either pre-trial or as an alternative sentence - who are in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment. **No other agency in the Capital District provides TASC's wraparound services to criminal justice stakeholders.**

More specifically, TASC assists criminal justice stakeholders in:

- balancing community-based treatment and accountability for offenders in need of substance abuse and co-occurring mental health treatment (thereby reducing costs, recidivism and promoting community safety)
- providing an independent level of care recommendation by working with collateral providers (matching the appropriate treatment dosage)
- serving as a vehicle for coordinating decision-making and intervention strategies for justice during the entire continuum of care

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- and continuing case management support until the underlying criminal justice matter is resolved

Criminal justice stakeholders refer individuals to TASC – either pre-trial or as an alternative sentence - who are in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment. The process is as follows:

- A Referral Form is received from a justice stakeholder (i.e. party to the case)
- A RAP sheet is pulled to identify all open matters, all justice stakeholders and any holds
- An objective and comprehensive risks and needs evaluation is completed
- Possible barriers to treatment and gaps in services are identified
- Records are obtained from prior providers (e.g. Medical, Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatment)
- Collateral Information from supervision agency (if any) and emergency contact (often a family member) is obtained
- OASAS Level of Care and Drug Treatment Referral (LOCADTR) is submitted to the County Drug & Alcohol Coordinator in the District of Fiscal Responsibility (if residential treatment is indicated)
- An ATI plan is Submitted (to Courts, Attorneys, NYS DOCCS, Probation)
- Treatment Referrals are then submitted based on the approved level of care
- Treatment Intakes with appropriate treatment facilities are coordinated
- Treatment Placement is coordinated (including direct transport and a warm handoff to residential treatment facilities)
- Release from Custody is coordinated (if needed with releasing authority)
- A treatment mandate letter is obtained if needed for insurance purposes
- Weekly Treatment Monitoring and Progress Reporting are provided (to all justice stakeholders)
- Supervised Alcohol & Drug Testing is provided (as needed)
- A Higher Level of Care can be coordinated as a graduated sanction (if needed)
- Appropriate aftercare planning is provided

To maintain our critical services, TASC has received significant financial support from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) with secondary financial support from Rensselaer County and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. In 2019, however, TASC faced a severe funding shortfall that jeopardized TASC's existence. Due to the tremendous efforts of the Legislature, TASC was allocated \$200,000 in the most recently enacted New York State budget. This money was critical in ensuring that TASC could continue to deliver its essential services in 2019.

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Unfortunately, TASC again faces a funding shortfall in 2020. This is primarily due to the fact that the DCJS has committed all of its funding for ATI and reentry services programming through 2022. As a result, TASC is respectfully that each house of the Legislature allocate \$250,000 in the their respective one-house budget proposals and ultimately the enacted budget to TASC. TASC also requests that this funding be authorized in such a way as to allow for flexibility to respond to unmet and emerging needs. This funding will ensure that TASC can continue to deliver its essential services in 2020, and avoid insolvency and the layoff of six individuals.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and allowing me to provide information on TASC - a proven ATI and reentry provider in the Capital District for 35 years.