Make Kendra’s Law Permanent

Kendra’s Law (New York Mental Hygiene Law § 9.60) allows courts to order certain individuals with serious mental illness to comply with treatment while living in the community. The law is aimed at helping ‘revolving door’ patients and those who have a past history of violence associated with failure to comply with treatment.

Studies in New York State conclusively prove that Kendra’s Law helps patients while simultaneously keeping the public safer. It saves money by reducing the use of more expensive mental health treatments (hospitalization) and criminal justice resources (jails, prisons, courts). It also reduces the strain on mental health and law-enforcement personnel and keeps them safer.

Over a six month period:

- 55 percent fewer recipients engaged in suicide attempts or physical harm to self;
- 49 percent fewer abused alcohol;
- 48 percent fewer abused drugs;
- 47 percent fewer physically harmed others;
- 46 percent fewer damaged or destroyed property; and
- 43 percent fewer threatened physical harm to others.

Among the mentally ill individuals in court ordered treatment:

- 74 percent fewer experienced homelessness;
- 77 percent fewer experienced psychiatric hospitalization;
- 83 percent fewer experienced arrest; and
- 87 percent fewer experienced incarceration.

81% of consumers receiving the court-ordered treatment stated it helped them get well and stay well. The New York study showing reduced violence and improved patient outcomes are consistent with those done in other states.

In light of the above, The Town of Chester Police Department vigorously supports making Kendra’s Law permanent.