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Moving Mentally Ill Could Ease Overcrowding at Richmond City Jail

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RICHMOND

RICHMOND, VA (WTVR) - The Richmond City Jail currently holds more than 1,400 inmates, twice the number the facility was built to house, so the sheriff wants some of them to move.

Richmond Sheriff C.T. Woody says one way to combat ongoing overcrowding would be to relocate some inmates, like those who are mentally ill.

"The jail isn't a place for them," said Woody. "They should be in a mental health facility. We can only give standard care. Standard care is not enough for those who are mentally ill."

In fact, nearly 20 percent of the people incarcerated at the jail are dealing with some form of mental illness.

As a result, Woody says because his staff cannot properly treat those inmates that it makes their job more dangerous.

Those defendants who are mentally ill will have a chance to get evaluated and then, a Richmond judge will have the option of recommending that person be placed under supervision, get treatment at a mental health facility or face jail time.

Sheriff Woody says proper treatment is essential because, "no one who has a mental health condition, that is violent, will be put back out there in the community."

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