

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Steering Committee**

Draft Meeting Summary for December 7, 2016

1. Call To Order

Committee Chair Ken Mann called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. in the Whatcom County Council Conference Room, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham.

Members Present: Jill Bernstein, Ken Mann, Tyler Schroeder, Anne Deacon, Alfred Heydrich

Members Absent: Jack Hovenier, Chris Phillips

Review September 6 and October 6, 2016 Meeting Summaries

There were no changes.

2. VERA Institute Mapping Exercise

Mann stated he is happy with how the exercise was conducted. There was engaged participation from all the Task Force members.

Bernstein stated she was also happy with the presentations and the quality of the consultants.

The committee discussed the follow up and next steps from VERA consultants:

- Don't lose momentum from the exercise
- There needs to be follow up with the full Task Force
- The Task Force Co-Chairs will conference call with the consultants to discuss next steps
- Commissioner Heydrich talked with the consultants about the pretrial assessment tools. They provided a summary of pretrial supervision risk assessment tools. He would like to see a nationwide survey of other jurisdictions using pretrial risk assessment and supervision to examine the issue of liability:
 - Legal analysis of the risk
 - The history and patten of actual liability problems
 - The different legal liability in Washington State
- Risk Management versus avoiding liability
- Look to the programs in Yakima and Spokane Counties and the House Public Safety Committee Work Session on Jails in Washington State on TVW.
[\[http://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2016121015\]](http://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2016121015)
- The Task Force committees interact with the consultants through Forrest Longman

3. Discussion with Tyler Schroeder regarding Whatcom County 2017-2018 Budget

Schroeder stated the County may have a surplus now with the passage of the emergency management services (EMS) levy, and asked if the Council is committed to public safety needs and the Task Force recommendations. A programs approved in the 2017-2018 budget is a social worker in the public defender's office. When other programs are ready for implementation, they can consider funding

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Steering Committee**

Draft Meeting Summary for December 7, 2016

through a budget supplemental request. The Administration is committed to bringing forward Task Force budget supplemental requests.

The Committee discussed:

- A process to prioritize recommendations that are fully developed and ready for funding and implementation
- The Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) is paying for a project manager for all the efforts in the five-county region
- The BHO project manager can help Whatcom County with the community outreach with County attendance, support, and collaboration
- Triage Facility site plan outreach to the neighbors will be done in the first quarter of 2017
- Some level of site development and timeline should be available to the neighbors in the community outreach process

Deacon reported on the financial and operational planning for the triage center:

- She submitted a copy of a letter being sent to Tom McBride, with a copy to various jurisdictions (*on file*)
- Letter from North Sound Behavioral Health Organization for legislative capital request and regarding whether or not managed care organizations continue to cover behavioral health services
- Another concern is the possible repeal of the Affordable Care Act and whether the regional behavioral health organization structure will go away and stop funding local operations.
- Triage facility services are cheaper than hospitalization for acute care

The Committee discussed whether the Cures Act for opioid treatment and prevention can be useful to this process; talking to the full Task Force about the fate of the BHOs and the possibility of losing funding, given the outcome of the presidential election; and the change in the managed care services and the Healthcare Authority coming in 2020.

4. Phase 3 Report

The Committee discussed the County Council amending the Task Force ordinance to adjust the Task Force Phase 3 deadline, which is currently unrealistic for several reasons:

- Certain specifics of the triage committee won't be ready by the phase 3 deadline
- National events may impact whether the County proceeds with a triage facility
- Schedule the phase 3 report due date in June 2017
- The legislative session should be done by July 1, and they'll know more about the capital facilities funding request

This item will be scheduled on the Task Force agenda for December 12.

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Steering Committee**

Draft Meeting Summary for December 7, 2016

5. Update from Jack Hovenier on Jail Stakeholder Workgroup

Bernstein submitted a summary from the last meeting of the workgroup (*on file*).

Schroeder reported for the workgroup:

- The workgroup talked about the 2015 financial agreements between County and small cities and the letters between the City and Council
- At the next meeting, they will consider how the County administration could meet some of the requests of the City of Bellingham to result in a combined jail use agreement.
- The three funding options:
 - The City of Bellingham all-in option, which is no longer an option due to cost
 - The original option presented to the voters
 - A hybrid option that is a sales tax agreement between the City of Bellingham and County
- Neither the Workgroup, Task Force, nor the Executive are considering jail size.
- The financial agreements aren't concerned with jail size.
- The location and sales tax proposal have been agreed upon by the Workgroup

The Committee discussed the separation between the Task Force and Workgroup and the possibility that cities could lose the incentive for incarceration reduction if they commit to a certain cost.

6. Review of the Task Force Scope

Mann stated he's firm about not expanding the scope to things like early intervention, preventive programs, and other types of community health and wellness programs.

Deacon described a meeting with a few other Task Force members about those kinds of programs. She recommends that the Task Force gets a quarterly report from one of her certified prevention professionals, either Joe Fuller or Amy Hockenberry, about activities going on and their successes and outcomes. Many other groups with expertise are doing that kind of work. Let them continue the work they're doing. The community's work is being discussed in a public forum through the Whatcom Family Community Network, Health Department, Brigid Collins House, Opportunity Council, and others.

Schroeder stated he's concerned a quarterly review would open the door to that type of work. Instead, provide an avenue for that discussion at the appropriate committee.

Jackie Mitchell, Health Department, stated the Behavioral Health Revenue Advisory Committee receives regular reports, and people could be invited to go to those meetings.

Mann stated there seems to be consensus by this Committee and others to not expand the scope. He will make a statement, but not have a discussion on, the fact that the County Council has

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Steering Committee**

Draft Meeting Summary for December 7, 2016

provided a scope for the Task Force and is pleased with the work the Task Force is doing, and the Task Force and the three committees have identified and will stay focused on that work.

Other Business

Deacon reported on the Ground level Response And Community Engagement (GRACE) Program:

- It is a program for emergency medical services (EMS) and emergency room diversion to reduce crises that happen, especially downtown
- The planning team is preparing a community stakeholder forum to map a coordinated system of crisis response and engagement
- It will be similar to the CHART program in Everett, but will also have components of LEAD and other programs
- It will also include EMS and hospital
- Everyone will own the system map
- The City of Bellingham and hospital agreed to help pay for the facilitator.

Heydrich stated he is stepping down as Chair of the Legal and Justice Systems Subcommittee, but will keep attending these Steering Committee meetings when possible.

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Project Brief

Planning for Criminal Justice, Emergency Department and EMS Diversion through Behavioral Health and Social Service Outreach and Stabilization Services

1. Introduction

The purpose of this brief is to outline a planning project being carried out by a team convened by the Whatcom County Health Department, and provide summary background, promising practices research, and a potential avenue for future funding.

2. Project Overview

The County Health Department, the City of Bellingham (COB) and PeaceHealth St Joseph Medical Center (SJMC) are each contributing \$2,500 to support the cost of a three to four month, county-wide visioning process focused on improving services for people who have complex psychosocial needs and are in need of crisis intervention, stabilization, and recovery services.

Many of these individuals have one or more of the following conditions that make their cases complex: Homelessness; psychiatric impairment; chronic medical illness; substance abuse problems, including alcoholism.

Often times, these individuals receive services from multiple agencies and governmental entities resulting in a lack of information exchange, and probable duplication and inefficiencies.

The **purpose** of this project is to develop a set of recommendations to: 1) Increase public safety; 2) reduce excessive use and cost to emergency and criminal justice systems and 3) improve the health and well-being of individuals with complex needs. These recommendations will be aimed at accomplishing the following set of **objectives**:

- ↑ Appropriate and effective use of crisis services and law enforcement
- ↑ Engagement with treatment and supportive services
- ↑ Treatment compliance
- ↑ Effective deployment of limited resources
- ↓ Unnecessary ED Visits
- ↓ Unnecessary EMS Calls
- ↓ Law Enforcement Contacts
- ↓ Jail Bookings
- ↓ Jail Days

Project Team

- Anne Deacon, Manager
Whatcom County Human Services
- Greg Winter, Executive Director
Opportunity Council
- Dan Hamill, Council Member
Bellingham City Council
- Chris Phillips, Dir Community Affairs
PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center
- Tara Sundin, Manager
COB Community & Economic Development
- Mark Gardner, Policy Analyst
City of Bellingham
- Carol Gipson, Executive Director
WAHA

Coordinated by a cross organizational project team, the planning process will be facilitated by Timothy Corey, Colibri Facilitation (Attachment 1). The Scope of Work between the Whatcom County Health Department and the facilitator (Attachment 2) outlines the process in detail. The primary project deliverables include:

- A map that outlines current services and how a number of interacting systems work
- Identification of gaps in services and problem areas
- Review of model programs in other communities that can inform this work
- Recommendations and next steps for policy and decision makers.

The above deliverables with an executive summary will be made available to the three funding organizations and the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force.

3. Background

Whatcom County: In collaboration with human service providers, the Whatcom County Health Department develops, implements and administers community programs that build an infrastructure of supportive services for vulnerable residents. The Health Department funds these efforts with local monies, leveraging regional, state and federal dollars as opportunities arise. The North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) administers Medicaid-funded behavioral health services in the five-county region, working collaboratively with the Health Department to optimize systems of care. The majority of crisis services are funded by the BHO.

The *Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force* was created by Whatcom County in March of 2016 with a charge to recommend a continuum of new or enhanced programs to divert from or prevent incarceration of individuals with mental illness or substance abuse disorders. The Task Force recently produced a well-received report with the recommendation that the County in collaboration with the BHO and area service providers develop two adjacent 16 bed units, one for acute detox and the other for mental health stabilization services. These two units would create an expanded and enhanced Crisis Triage facility, certified by the state and able to serve as a diversion from the criminal justice system as well as more costly hospital services.

The City of Bellingham: The City jointly developed and funds the following programs that are designed to reduce unnecessary utilization of crisis services and better serve the needs of people who are experiencing homelessness: Community Paramedic Program; WAHA Intensive Case Management Program; Opportunity Council Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).

PeaceHealth St Joseph Medical Center: PeaceHealth operates a fully staffed Level 2 Trauma Emergency Department that includes a 6-bed behavioral health observation area and a 20-bed inpatient behavioral health unit that accommodates involuntary hospitalizations. Additionally, PeaceHealth hosts two *Community Connectors* in the emergency department in collaboration with Unity Care NW and Sea Mar Community Health Centers. Focused on avoiding unnecessary utilization of ED and hospital services by high utilizing more complex patients, the Community Connectors link ED and primary care providers.

Project Brief

Planning for Criminal Justice, Emergency Department and EMS Diversion through Behavioral Health and Social Service Outreach and Stabilization Services

4. Promising Practices

The City Senior Policy and Legislative Analyst conducted a thorough review (Attachment 3) of regional promising practices focusing on the following programs:

- Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) programs
- Chronic Utilizer Alternative Response Team (CHART) - Everett
- Behavioral Health Unit - Portland
- Response Planning De-escalation and Referral (RADAR) - Shoreline
- Hot Spotter Program - Spokane

Quoting from the review:

These programs all work with relatively similar populations: non-violent offenders and/or those with persistent behavioral issues that manifest in the public realm. Consistent with public safety, such programs seek to solve behavioral health issues, reduce overuse of system resources, or divert or otherwise address certain low-level crimes. If the intent of such programs are met, individuals should be shifted from jail, emergency services, and the justice system and toward services such as housing, mental health and drug treatment.

Over time, such programs should also reduce incarceration and the need to treat mental health issues in jail, freeing up resources for other services. Similarly, they should allow the justice system to shift its focus toward processing more serious crimes.

5. Potential Funding Opportunity

Accountable Communities of Health work with the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) to align resources and activities which will improve whole person health and wellness. ACH participants promote health equity in their respective communities and address the broader issues that affect health through regional health improvement plans.

The North Sound Accountable Community of Health is the ACH formed to serve the five-county North Sound region and will, over the next several months, be considering Medicaid waiver project proposals. Care coordination for high risk Medicaid populations is one of the project areas being required by the HCA, and thus Medicaid waiver funds could serve as an avenue for funding some of the recommendations that will be developed as a result of above outlined planning process.

Project Brief

Planning for Criminal Justice, Emergency Department and EMS Diversion through Behavioral Health and Social Service Outreach and Stabilization Services