

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force Behavioral Health Committee

Meeting Summary for November 16, 2021

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1. Call to Order

Committee Co-Chair Mike Parker called the meeting to at 9:09 a.m. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar.

Members Present: Chris Cochran, Doug Chadwick, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Dan Hammill, Mike Hilley, Perry Mowery, Mike Parker

Members Absent: Nathan Bajema, Seth Fleetwood, Byron Manering, Michael G. Smith, Brien Thane

2. [Task Force Communications \(00:01:13\)](#)

Parker reported on the intent of the Task Force to improve its public communication about the work of the Task Force.

Committee members discussed potential campaign topics, including:

- The Crisis Stabilization Center
- Service capacity for behavioral health capacity in the community, including challenges and existing options for treatment
- The intersect between all first responders, including law enforcement, EMS, and behavioral health providers. Highlight what they are doing collaboratively to get people into services.
- Educating the public about how law enforcement officers can respond to behavioral health calls
- Keep the messages simple
- Include messages about what's next, such as a 24/7 behavioral health urgent care center
- The range of programs that include the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) Programs, the upcoming Alternative Response Team Program, and the proposal for the ride-along program
- Include a flow chart of where law enforcement and first responders go, where they can take people, who they should call, and the path a person could take when in contact with law enforcement

The committee members discussed the purpose and content of the Respond Whatcom website, a state committee to discuss the Blake Decision and Healthcare Authority upcoming report to address the requirements of the Blake Decision, short videos that work well as an information medium, and harmonizing and coordinating the various information sources.

3. [Continued review of priority items \(00:22:30\)](#)

The committee members reviewed work done so far and discussed the reentry and warm handoff item:

- The current status and future goals of the Health Department reentry program; new contractor and connections to existing programs
- Handoff and community transitions
- The need for a survey of existing resources
- Understand impeding factors such as housing and jobs
- Identify gaps in connections
- The role of the crisis stabilization center
- Funding for a navigator position embedded in the jail

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- Review the expectations and levels of training for individuals providing behavioral health services
- Add a peer counselor staff person who is closely supported by a supervisor
- Review the admission denials at the crisis stabilization center
- Status of the number of releases due to the Blake Decision
- Advocacy to State legislatures regarding the requirement for two treatment interventions before arrest; make sure interventions are meaningful and effective

Committee members discussed the priority item to address methamphetamine use:

- Lack of treatment
- Problems with finding housing
- Other problematic drugs that are on the horizon in the community
- Current drug use trends
- Lack of treatment services system and capacity; providing different treatment options for different people
- A recovery navigator attached to the LEAD Program, funded through the Health Care Authority
- The necessity of inpatient treatment for meth addiction; creating relationships around the state with inpatient facilities that treat meth addiction
- Identify the necessary action items for next steps on meth use

4. [Agenda items for December Joint Meeting with Legal & Justice Systems Committee \(01:18:08\)](#)

Mowery stated there was a request to include an agenda item to give a simple report on use of the Crisis Stabilization Center.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.