

Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Justice Project

SAC GROUP DISCUSSION #5 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Thursday, July 7, 2022

2:00 – 3:00 pm

Meeting Summary

SAC Members in Attendance: Arlene Feld, Atul Deshmane, Barry Buchanan, Brel Froebe, Brooke Eolande, Cliff Langley, Daniel Hammill, Don Almer (for Rebecca Mertzig), Doug Chadwick, Eric Richey, Erika Lautenbach, Eve Smason-Marcus, Harriet Markell, Heather Flaherty, Kara Mitchell, Kendra Cook, Kristin Hanna, Maialisa Vanyo, Michael Lilliquist, Mary Lou Steward, Michael Lilliquist, Perry Mowery, Peter Frazier, RB Tewksbury, Satpal Sidhu, Scott Korthuis, Stephen Gockley, Teresa Bosteter

Presenters: Daniel Hammill – IPRTF Behavioral Health Subcommittee Co-Chair, Mike Parker - IPRTF Behavioral Health Subcommittee Co-Chair, Wendy Jones - Chief Corrections Deputy Sherriff's Office, Ryan Anderson – Assistant City Attorney Sr, City of Bellingham

Absent SAC Members: Anthony Hillaire, Bill Elfo, Chad Butenschoen, Darlene Peterson, Daron Smith, Deborah Hawley, David Goldman, Eli Wainman, Jack Hovenier, Jeff Monks, Jon Mutchler, Katrice Rodriguez/Rick George, Mike Hilley, Patrick Brodie Allen, Raylene King, Seth Fleetwood, Tyler Schroeder

To view a video recording, click on the link in the section heading.

[Welcome](#) – Dan Hammill – Bellingham City Council Member & Mike Parker

[Presentation on Behavioral Health Services in County Jail and Work Center](#)– Wendy Harris (Chief of Corrections, Whatcom County)

[Overview of the Issues](#)

- Approximately 45% of the offender population carries a diagnosis of a series mental illness. Due to resolving cases the number has increased to 58%, this means offenders have been transferred to Western State Hospital and/or formally diagnosed.
- Approximately 65-80% of the offenders have some type of substance use issues
- Complicating factors related to the issues above
 - Cognitive disabilities –examples: autism spectrum, offenders born with fetal alcohol syndrome and under the influence of a substance.
 - Underlying health
 - Undiagnosed/untreated medical problems
 - Refusal to cooperate with treatment
 - Cultural stigma or beliefs around mental illness and /or substance use
 - Denial

- Criminogenic: Thinking and behavior differentiate people who commit crimes from those who do not, independent of mental illness.
 - Incarcerated individuals with mental illness are frequently both mentally ill and criminogenic, and both need to be addressed.
 - As more research has come out, they are finding if you identify someone with criminogenic factors as well as a mental illness and medication is given to stabilize the individual, it does not address the underlying criminogenic issues nor it will not reduce their return to incarceration due to only solving one issue not the other.
 - Risk factors for criminogenic behavior include:
 - Antisocial behavior
 - Antisocial personality
 - Antisocial thinking
 - Antisocial associates
 - Dysfunctional family
 - Substance abuse
 - Employment and education
 - Leisure and recreation
- Current corrections behavioral health programs within Whatcom County Jail include:
 - 2 Full time Mental Health Professionals (MHP's)
 - 1 Full Time Re-Entry Specialists
 - 1 Part Time Psychiatric ARNP - complete evaluations and medication treatment
 - Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Program (MOUD)
 - Since January of 2022, 83 offenders have started the MOUD Program
 - Also, since January of 2022, 453 offenders have started the program who had not been reached out to by a community agency but started while they were incarcerated.
 - Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) – hosts group meetings as well as one on one for individuals who report being a victim. Whatcom County Jail is a third-party reporter. This means if an offender feels like they have been sexually assaulted or sexually harassed by inmates, staff, or prior to coming to jail, they can report to them to DVSAS.
 - Whatcom County Jail also works closely with a designated crisis responder for involuntary detention for mental health issues
- Current agencies that work closely with the Whatcom County Jail include:
 - Voluntary community substance use programs such as Alcohol Anonymous and Narcotic Anonymous (AA, NA)
 - Faith- based programs
 - Work with wide variety of State and Local agencies including
 - Department of Social Health Services and Department of Children and Family Services (DSHS/DCFS)
 - Western State Hospital (WSH)
 - Lake Whatcom - PACT Program
 - Compass Health
 - Lifeline Connections

- Bridget Collins
 - Opportunity Council
 - Lummi Nation
 - Northwest Youth Services
 - GRACE/LEAD
- Main goal of this conversation is to change the perspective of the community on Whatcom County Jail and Work Center to be a point of engagement not just a place for incarceration.
- Programs like Ground- Level Response and Coordinated Engagement Program (GRACE) and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program (LEAD) are great because they are able to pull people out of the criminal justice cycle. However, studies are showing the number of enrollments is very low due to booking restrictions and offenders not being able to sign up.

Questions and Answers

- What are the percentages overlap of between cognitive issues and substance abuse? Would also like to see a diagram that shows the overlap?
 - Wendy will work on collecting data to send out to all the SAC members. The issue that she faces is she can only pull research from the last 5-8 years. Whatcom County Jail doesn't have the ability to collect cognitive and substance use data due to not having the resources. New research shows 60% of individuals who suffer from a serious mental illness also have criminogenic risk factors.
- Would like more clarity on the magnitude of need categories and to understand those percentages of the research Wendy referenced.
 - Wendy will try to collect resources and research to share with the SAC, including references to national studies.
- Wondering if Whatcom County Jail does any screenings for criminogenic factors?
 - Yes, there are screening tools such as standard psych examines that identify individuals who are symptomatic to antisocial personality behavior. Research is showing 80 percent of offenders who are in prison would classify as having criminogenic behavior.
- In order to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, how many staff members would there need to be to adequately staff the programs in order for them to be the most effective? Also, regarding a previous meeting Wendy mentioning no available rooms for resources to use so where do they meet?
 - Staffing resources would need to double. The main issue is there is no space for them to adequately perform their jobs in the jail due to no conference room or no one room available. Staff resources will come in at various odd hours to be able to use the room that is available, whether that is after hours or on the weekends.
- Health Department Director clarified the following:
 - Criminogenic behavior does not equal mental illness and mental illness does not equal criminogenic behavior.

- Individuals who suffer from mental illness are more likely to be a victim of a crime than a perpetrator of a crime.
- Wondering what jail services are reasonable to serve a 20-day jail stay? The offenders with antisocial criminogenic behavior are deeply rooted and cannot be addressed within a 20-day jail stay. The Whatcom County Jail deals with a large portion of drug involved offenders and needs qualified staff to adequately provide treatment for those individuals.
 - MOUD Program does help a lot. Current issue is a large percentage of offenders who come into jail show opioid drug use along with methamphetamine. MOUD is a great source for offenders who have a substance abuse disorder.
- Wondering how we could increase resources such as a re-entry specialist? Noticing in the data regarding the charges for each individual. A lot of the charges include DUI and DV charges and wondering what are the resources and support in the community that would help reduce the incarceration for those charges?
 - Charges are often paired. Data set is only picking up all the charges and doesn't correlate them, which is a problem and makes the data very confusing but still working on solutions.

[Presentation on misdemeanor crimes and their impacts on the jail](#) – Ryan Anderson (Assistant City Attorney Sr, City of Bellingham)

- Ryan Anderson has been in this position for 16 years
- He noticed a lot of change within the community jail, and the way we address crime in our area
- Discussed mostly dealing with misdemeanors and quality of life crimes. For example, those crimes include shoplifting, theft, trespass, urinating defecating and disorderly conduct.
- Estimating around 2500-2600 criminal cases a year in the City of Bellingham and this does not include misdemeanors infractions.
- Most serious cases included with misdemeanors are DUI and DV cases.
 - These include: stalking cases, no contact orders and DUI's.
- Most cases in the municipal court are solved with a summons and are cited and released in the field
- There are three bookings categories
 - Mandatory Bookings: Include DUI's and domestic violence cases
 - Warrants: In the pasts these are placed on someone who doesn't appear for their out of court custody hearings, doesn't serve their jail time or does not attend their probation review and they would receive a warrant
 - Very rare due to booking restrictions include: harassment charges, assault, trespass or refusal to leave a business.
- Electric Home Monitoring Systems (EHM) and GPS Systems are provided by Friendship Diversion Services
 - EHM and SPS are home monitoring systems bracelet is worn on ankle with a GPS included in the device and you can bring up a map to see where the individual has been. They are allowed to go to work and medical appointments. The individual receives day for day service credit for using the device.

- City of Bellingham uses SCRAM devices that monitor alcohol and drug use while wearing the device
- The current issue the City of Bellingham is facing due to problems with the jail, is noncompliance.
 - For example, this morning Anderson had 30 individuals on out of custody agreement and only 9 out of 30 people showed up. They know there will be no consequences for their behavior.

Questions and Answers

- Is City of Bellingham dealing with percentages of categories similar to what Whatcom County Jail is facing?
 - There is a lower percentage of mental illness present due to a bigger pool of individuals. Bellingham is dealing with a higher percentage of not showing up for court dates.
- Do the City of Bellingham prosecutors handle trials for felonies? Are there any programs in the community that you could think of to help reduce the number of crimes?
 - The City of Bellingham only deals with misdemeanors within the city. Every felony and any misdemeanors that are outside of the cities would go to Whatcom County Prosecutor. Programs that would be beneficial include, improving engagement, services for mental health and alcohol, increase in law enforcement, and a change of attitude of offenders to reduce the cycle.
- Anderson also pointed out that it's not just the jail aspect but also the lack of law enforcement due to understaffing.
- Is Mental Health Court available and if so, what are the results?
 - Mental Health Court is still ongoing but membership numbers are low. It is hard to find people because a person has to be a good fit for the program. Many opt to complete their sentence, which isn't very long, rather than participating in Mental Health Court. Success in a mental health court can't be measured by lack of recidivism, and success should be redefined.
- The question of what are the root causes. Many findings indicate that investing in children before they are at the age of 5 is a big determinant. As a community, we should think about making those investments. Prior to booking restrictions, Whatcom County's recidivism rates are 60 percent. Some are immune to punishment and time they will have to serve doesn't factor into their decision-making. We cannot hold someone indefinitely for quality of life crimes.
- Discussion regarding potential future presentation from the Public Defender's Office on the criminal legal system, including the type of people they are seeing and their perspective on what programs would be helpful in the work they are doing.

Wrap Up – Email any questions for any of the presenters at SAC@co.whatcom.wa.us