

Whatcom County
INCARCERATION PREVENTION AND REDUCTION TASK FORCE
Working Beyond the Legal and Justice Systems

Authorized Purposes: Whatcom County Code, Chapter 2.46

Recommend developing or enhancing programs *along a continuum* to reduce incarceration of individuals struggling with mental illness and chemical dependency;

Recommend necessary and effective services that promote *successful transition* from jail or triage center back into the community to *reduce recidivism and improve public health* and safety.

Considerations supporting broad scope of inquiry:

Widespread community interest and expectations; public as constituency
Unique opportunity
"Early wins" and longer-term efforts

Broad areas of programming and services already identified:

- Within the legal/justice system;
- Parallel to or in partnership with the legal/justice system; and
- *Community-based and unrelated to the legal/justice system*

"Upstream" pre-criminal justice involvement; "downstream" post-involvement stabilization.

Expanding task force scope is not directed at creating programs, providing services, solving societal problems, or necessarily increasing governmental responsibilities:

- Mapping; gathering information and data
- Identifying gaps, limitations, barriers
- Best practices, local benchmarking

Lead toward community-wide goals and coordination: similar to existing multi-stakeholder efforts.

Most effective to prevent or reduce entering or re-entering criminal justice system:

- Huge cost benefits, growing over time
- Promote public/private efficiencies, coordination, partnerships
- Acknowledge and address "shared" populations
- Achieve positive multiplier effects
- Better utilize existing funding
- Take timely advantage of emerging program and funding opportunities

Stephen Gockley
April 4, 2016

Anne Deacon

From: Joe Fuller
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2016 11:45 AM
To: Anne Deacon
Subject: Whatcom County prevention efforts

Hi Anne,

Here is a brief snapshot of some of the groups meeting around prevention work. There are certainly more, but these are some that come to mind first...

- 1) Whatcom Prevention Coalition (next meeting 4/7 at 3:30pm; focuses on substance abuse, healthy youth development, supporting families, policy work, community assessment and strategic planning etc.; broad representation from school and community-based partners).
- 2) Ferndale Community Coalition (meets first Thursday of each month; similar in focus to the Whatcom Prevention Coalition but for Ferndale specific issues)
- 3) ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Resilience Team (next meeting 4/29; focus is on risk reduction, building resiliency, compassionate schools and community)
- 4) Campus Community Coalition (partnership of the campuses of WWU, BTC, NWIC, WCC, and public schools; focuses on student behavioral health, neighborhood behaviors, etc.)
- 5) Hospitality Resource Alliance (HRA is a committee of the Campus Community Coalition; they meet once a month to discuss downtown business concerns such as safety, violence, crime, substance use; members include local bar owners, Liquor Cannabis Board, Bellingham PD, Bellingham Fire, college campuses, etc.)
- 6) Parents Matter (next meeting 4/20 at 8:30am; parents and professionals focus on prevention and youth issues in the Bellingham School District)
- 7) East Whatcom (next Columbia Valley meeting is 4/13 from 2-3pm; focus on supporting youth and families in the Mt. Baker School District)
- 8) Lummi Partnerships- The Whatcom Family & Community Network is currently receiving a Drug-Free Communities mentoring grant to work with the Lummi Cedar Project to build capacity to apply for their own Drug Free Communities Grant; a Lummi-specific coalition would be required by the grant
- 9) Whatcom Early Learning Network (supports readiness to learn, early childhood development, etc.)
- 10) Nooksack Way of Life (prevention services delivered in the community; community assessment and planning; multiple workgroups meet)
- 11) Gang Prevention Team (meets at least quarterly; focuses on community building, risk reduction, etc.)
- 12) Schools- several schools have Prevention Clubs that are active in prevention education, policy work, and related efforts (they all meet on their own schedules)
- 13) MAD HOPE (suicide prevention-although this isn't a group that meets regularly, it is a group that has done suicide prevention presentations in all 7 school districts, plus community settings)

There are other active groups such as Teen Council, DVSAS and the Bellingham/Whatcom Commission against Domestic Violence, and the Homeless Support Coalition (formerly Readiness to Learn), all of which are connected to some of the efforts above. It is common to have individuals that participate in multiple groups, and we have some individuals that participate in almost each one. Because of the this level of participation, communication between the groups has been successful and allowed for a more productive coordination of services and funding.

This is a very quick summary, but I'm happy to answer any questions that others may have. I have also attached an information sheet on the Whatcom Prevention Coalition. It is likely a little out of date, but gets the general idea across.