

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Triage Facility Ad Hoc Committee

Meeting Summary, April 14, 2016

Whatcom County Health Department Conference Room

509 Girard Street, Bellingham WA

9:00 – 10:30am

## Attendance

Present	Representing
Bernstein, Jill	Citizen Representative
Brubaker, Jeff	Bellingham Fire Department
Deacon, Anne	Whatcom County Human Services
Hovenier, Jack	Consumer Representative
Mann, Ken	Whatcom County Council Member
Parks, Jeff (proxy for Sheriff Elfo)	Whatcom County Sheriff's Office
Phillips, Chris	PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center
Schroeder, Tyler	Whatcom County Executive Office
Walker, Kathy (proxy for Dave McEachran)	Whatcom County Prosecutors Office
Whitcutt, Sandy (proxy for Betsy Kruse)	North Sound Mental Health Administration
Wight, Dean (proxy for Stephen Gockley)	WAHA
<b>Absent</b>	
Morgan, Irene	Restorative Community Coalition
Polidan, Randy	Unity Care NW

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Call to Order

Chris Phillips called the meeting to order.

Jill informed the Committee that the larger Task Force meetings are shifting in content to reports from the sub-committees, with sub-committee members fielding questions from and seeking recommendations from the Task Force.

Dean requested that he shift from his role as facilitator for today's meeting to his previous role as Stephen Gockley's proxy. The Committee agreed to this request.

The Meeting Summary from March 24, 2016 was not reviewed.

### 2. Involuntary Treatment

The Committee had a lengthy discussion about the different types of treatment facilities (as detailed on the handout provided by Anne Deacon), the options for voluntary vs. involuntary treatment in the region, and the current activities of other communities in the state that could inform the development of a treatment facility here in Whatcom County.

- Facility Options
  - Voluntary
    - Current triage facility
    - Average length of stay, voluntarily, is 3 – 5 days
    - Individuals often transition into voluntary treatment after detoxification
  - Involuntary
    - We do not have an involuntary facility in Whatcom County

## Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Triage Facility Ad Hoc Committee

Meeting Summary, April 14, 2016

Whatcom County Health Department Conference Room

509 Girard Street, Bellingham WA

9:00 – 10:30am

- You cannot hold someone for > 12 hours without an assessment by a Designated Mental Health Professional (DMHP) for a civil commitment
- An involuntary facility may accept voluntary placements
- Crisis Stabilization Unit
  - New type of facility
  - Recommended for Whatcom
  - Currently operational in Snohomish
  - Certified by the State of WA
- Evaluation & Treatment Center
  - St. Joseph Medical Center has 20 psychiatric beds that are certified as an Evaluation & Treatment Center

### Key Points:

- RCW 10.31 allows for pre-arrest diversion to one of the following types of facilities:
  - Voluntary Triage
  - Involuntary Triage
    - Requires ability to seclude and restrain
    - For Mental Illness only
    - More expensive to operate than voluntary
  - Crisis Stabilization Unit
- Whatcom County Currently has the following types of facilities:
  - Voluntary Triage
    - Does not meet treatment needs
  - Evaluation and Treatment (St. Joseph Medical Center's 20 bed psychiatric unit is designated as an Evaluation and Treatment facility)
    - Does not accept 12-hour police hold involuntary individuals because they are full to overbooked with civil commitments
    - Employee safety is a concern
- Facilities in other communities
  - Snohomish County – voluntary triage center, certified by the state
    - 10 minute law enforcement drop-offs
  - Thurston County – building an involuntary triage center, adjacent to their jail
- 10 Minute Drop-Off
  - The minimum amount of time it takes to make an initial nursing assessment to confirm that an individual is able to stay (medically) at the treatment center
  - Preferred by law enforcement and emergency medical services because it allows LE/EMS to return to work promptly
  - Effective and efficient protocol across the country
- North Sound Behavioral Health Organization's recommendation
  - Voluntary, certified, 10-minute drop-off

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Triage Facility Ad Hoc Committee

Meeting Summary, April 14, 2016

Whatcom County Health Department Conference Room

509 Girard Street, Bellingham WA

9:00 – 10:30am

- Impact that a voluntary facility will have on law enforcement
  - Unclear how the facility in Snohomish is impacting jail utilization
  - Kathy noted that the study she and Jackie Mitchell did last year indicated that most individuals in jail eligible for involuntary could not be placed there due to prior criminal history.
  - Tyler noted that law enforcement placements would need to be prioritized in a voluntary facility
  - Jeff expressed his concern that the jail should not be the default destination for individuals with complex mental health needs/criminal behaviors

**Consensus Recommendation:** The Committee supports a voluntary facility at this time, and recommends that further discussions take place with community partners regarding the possibility of involuntary 12 hour law enforcement holds. The Committee also recommends that preference be given to law enforcement at the voluntary facility.

### 3. Presentation of Phase I Recommendations

Should the needs assessment come before the recommendation and how did the Committee come up with the two 16-bed facility recommendation?

- Limited needs assessment performed as a part of the Phase I work
- Concern that the needs assessment be “reality based”
- Concern that recommendation reflect actual need, not minimum size allowed
- Capital funding request needs to be submitted to the State this summer
- Current needs assessment is related to substance use disorder only, not mental health
- Mental health assessment will not be complete in time for funding “ask”
- Needs assessment is imperative for finance, but will not capture the full scope of the need
- Whatcom County Health Department is working on mental health turnaways from the current triage facility
  - Turnaway data will be understated because of the understanding in the community that beds are not available
- It is important to align recommendations with the Regional Behavioral Health Organization, if possible
- Consulting firm will use population, prevalence and utilization to make recommendations, utilization may be understated

**Consensus Recommendation:** The Committee supports the recommendation of two 16-bed facilities with a common front door, based on limited needs assessment data as reflected in the Phase I Report. In August, there will be confirmation of size from a more formal needs assessment of at least two 16-bed facilities, and the Committee believes that

## **Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force**

Triage Facility Ad Hoc Committee

Meeting Summary, April 14, 2016

Whatcom County Health Department Conference Room

509 Girard Street, Bellingham WA

9:00 – 10:30am

the need is likely greater. The Committee believes that it is important to move forward with the recommendation at this time.

Dean will revise the document to be presented to the Task Force, and Tyler and Dean will present on May 02, 2016.

#### **4. Work Plan for Phase II**

To be discussed at the next Committee Meeting

#### **5. Meeting Schedule**

May 26, 2016 from 9 – 10:30am at the WCHD, 509 Girard Street, Lower Level

Future meetings will be the Third Thursday of each month, unless schedules of Committee members require that the meeting be shifted.

#### **6. Adjourned**