

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Behavioral Health Subcommittee
Meeting Summary for July 16, 2018

1. Call To Order

Committee Chair Anne Deacon called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. at the Health Department Creekside Conference Room, 509 Girard Street, Bellingham.

Members Present: Anne Deacon, Dan Hammill, Byron Manering, Kelli Linville, Starleen Maharaj-Lewis, Ryan King

Also Present: Jill Bernstein,

Members Absent: Betsy Kruse, Doug Chadwick, Mike Parker

3. Preliminary statistics on drug use trends from the hospital, jail, and Opportunity Council homeless service center

Deacon submitted a handout of a report on the *Behavioral Health Needs of Jail Inmates in Washington State* from the State Department of Social and Health Services.

The committee members discussed drug use trends, including:

- National and international research shows that mental illness rarely drives criminal behavior, but is three time more likely when combined with a substance use disorder (SUD).
- Mental health evaluations in the Yakima jail facility
- Competency evaluations
- Statistics shown on the report (see above)
- In 2014, data shows the participants in the Parent/Child Assistance Program are 100 percent Medicaid eligible, 76 percent had been in jail at some point in time, and 78 percent had past opioid use, 79 percent had methamphetamine use, 84 percent had a mental health diagnosis, 77 percent of those who had a previous jail experience did not have stable housing when they came into the program.
- The stability of access to healthcare and impacts to local programs due to changes in the Affordable Healthcare Act and changes in State funding
- Private mental health hospitals drain dollars from local programs
- The prevalence of co-occurring disorders
- The need to increase access to SUD treatment through an in-patient co-occurring disorder program on Division Street.
- New funding for the Girard Street recovery house.

2. Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 2263 regarding funding for housing and cultural activities

Hammill reported on the purpose of ESHB 2263.

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Behavioral Health Subcommittee
Meeting Summary for July 16, 2018

The committee members discussed the possibility of having a countywide housing levy and developing a plan for making a recommendation to the County Council to put the levy on the ballot.

4. Next Steps: Ideas & Further Information

- Develop standardized questions to do research in the jail
- Work with the City to develop statistics for the housing levy and to show what can be done. Develop ideas on how to present the case in favor of a levy to the County Council. Continue to explore the option of presenting the tax to the County Council.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Public Comment

John Campbell spoke about sales tax in terms of a new jail.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.