

Incarceration Prevention & Reduction Task Force / Law & Justice Council Meeting Summary November 2, 2020

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1. Call to Order

Task Force Co-Chairs Jack Hovenier / Stephen Gockley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Barry Buchanan, Anne Deacon, David Doll, Bill Elfo, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Dan Hammill, Mike Hilley, Raylene King, Scott Korthuis, Seth Fleetwood, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson, Eric Richey, Maia Vanyo, Mike Parker (Proxy for Greg Winter)

Absent: Travis Brockie, Deborra Garrett, Deborah Hawley, Jack Hovenier, Byron Manering, Eric Peterson, Dave Reynolds, Tyler Schroeder, Kevin Turner, Bruce Van Glubt

2. [Committee Updates \(00:02:17\)](#)

Hammill reported for the Behavioral Health Committee. He referenced and read from the October 6, 2020 committee summary in the packet.

Feld reported for the Legal & Justice Systems Committee. She referenced the October 13, 2020 committee summary in the packet. The managed care organizations (MCOs) are not going to support reentry programs. Funding is necessary for reentry programs and the crisis stabilization program.

Task Force members discussed the MCO contracts with the Health Care Authority, whether there are recommendations for specific requests from State legislators for the MCOs, and statistics on the number of people released from jail or in the crisis stabilization facility who are covered by Medicaid with severe behavioral health issues.

Buchanan reported for the Steering Committee.

3. [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\) Racial Equity Toolkit \(00:23:46\)](#)

Parker presented information on the Task Force's possible use of the GARE toolkit and examples of its use in other jurisdictions. The proposal is for the Task Force to implement the toolkit in its own work.

Buchanan moved for the Task Force to adopt the use of the GARE toolkit. The motion was seconded.

Korthuis stated the mayors of the small cities were uncomfortable committing to support the use of the toolkit.

The motion carried 15-1, Korthuis opposed and Moonwater absent.

4. [Behavioral Health Crisis Response Expansion \(00:34:15\)](#)

Deacon referenced the summary in the packet and reported on ways to expand and enhance response to people experiencing behavioral health crisis and, when possible, reduce law enforcement and increase unarmed responses.

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- The Health Department is leading these discussions and is engaging the Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) management team, the What-Comm 911 system, and crisis response teams
- They have begun with data collection
- They are currently civilian unarmed responses to people in behavioral health crisis through the mobile crisis outreach team, which averages 188 dispatches per month
- They will research other programs in the nation that include multi-professional responses
- Any system must be tailored to local needs to get the best return on investment
- They must not duplicate efforts while also integrating with existing services
- They must eventually identify which entity would provide the services

The Task Force members discussed whether it's possible to calculate cost savings from such a model, placing a high priority on the safety of responders, the need to expedite the process for developing an expanded response program, how the crisis stabilization center will be the programmatic hub for behavioral health services, capturing the cost savings from caring for and housing people rather than jailing people, engaging community members and stakeholders earlier in the process, how the Task Force can be engaged in this process, and the impact of the Covid pandemic on the workload of the Health Department in developing new programs.

5. [Update by Jurisdictions on Jail Diversion Programs \(01:05:13\)](#)

Peterson reported for the City of Bellingham on electronic home monitoring program and restarting in-person hearing and jury trials.

6. [Other Business \(01:09:00\)](#)

Richey gave an update on the law enforcement assisted diversion (LEAD) program.

Vanyo asked that the Task Force get an update on the use of electronic home monitoring from the District Court Administrator.

Parker gave an update on the Opportunity Council's work to open the recovery house supported housing.

Flaherty gave an update on creating the Racial Equity Commission.

Moonwater gave an update on the Safe Spaces Program at the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center, which provides a pathway for people in a marginalized community to communicate successfully with officials at the City of Bellingham.

7. [Public Comment](#)

No one spoke.

8. [Adjourn](#)

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.