

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Behavioral Health Subcommittee and Legal & Justice Systems Subcommittee
Joint Meeting Summary for May 11, 2021**

Note: Agenda item links to YouTube video are functional at the time this meeting summary was created, however YouTube links may change. Links will not be updated. Please refer to time notation on each agenda item.

1. Call to Order

Committee Co-Chairs called the meeting to order at 11:33 a.m. The meeting was a remote-only virtual Zoom webinar.

Behavioral Health Committee Members Present: Nathan Bajema, Megan Ballew, Chris Cochran, Arlene Feld, Seth Fleetwood, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Mike Hilley, Perry Mowery, Mike Parker, Michael G. Smith, Brien Thane

Members Absent: Doug Chadwick, Dan Hammill, Byron Manering,

Legal & Justice Committee Members Present: Bill Elfo, Arlene Feld, Stephen Gockley, Deborah Hawley, Raylene King, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson, Eric Richey, Flo Simon, Maia Vanyo, Perry Mowery (proxy for Jackie Mitchell)

Members Absent: David Freeman, Jackie Mitchell, Donnell Tanksley, Bruce Van Glubt

2. [Update on Behavioral Health Crisis Response Expansion program \(00:01:04\)](#)

-AND-

5. [The workforce shortage of behavioral health service providers in the community and how to attract personnel \(00:23:16\)](#)

Deacon submitted and read through a presentation on the program.

The Committee members discussed the challenge of comparing data with other programs around the country, the number of calls that were solely behavioral health-related and calls with a behavioral health component, whether post-implementation services can continue to track data, new legislation that limits law enforcement's ability to be present if there isn't a crime, providing coverage 24 hours per day and seven days per week, challenges with having an adequate workforce to provide services, facilities for court-ordered treatment and in-patient commitments, which data are and are not collected, qualifications of the behavioral health responders, elements of a call that includes safety concerns and how they define safety, whether there are safety concerns because law enforcement responded, whether the school district could help support the children whose families are involved in behavioral health crisis response calls, whether new programs are creating a strain on the existing network of providers, how to attract new providers to the community, and whether the criminal justice system should be the safety net for people to who need access to services.

3. [Reentry \(00:55:21\)](#)

The committee members discussed impacts from releases due to the Blake decision; reentry requires robust programs and services available after incarceration; reentry services provided by Goodwill Industries; current programs provided in the jail; reduction in services to inmates due to Covid

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pandemic; the need for services to avoid an inmate reentering to homelessness; the Department of Corrections Offender Reentry Community Safety (ORCS) program; future planning for outside agencies that are interested in partnering with specialists inside the jail; the need for recidivism rate data statistics to determine if reentry services are effective; the status of the jail behavioral health program from Compass Health, including mental health and substance use assessments and assistance getting into treatment; the need for more community case managers in provider programs and dedicated jail reentry navigators; the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) programs; estimating the likely arc of future jail inmates post-Covid, and how to serve the needs of that population; the need of jail reentry case navigators, and; a State Reentry Council December 2020 report on statewide goals and priority areas.

4. [Domestic Violence Offender Treatment \(01:28:42\)](#)

Moonwater reported that at this time, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services of Whatcom County (DVSAS) and the Domestic Violence Commission aren't moving forward at this time with domestic violence offender treatment due to a variety of reasons and transitions, although there is still interest.

6. [Making funding recommendations to the County Council \(01:23:46\)](#)

Parker reported on the Behavioral Health Committee's discussions about the need for IPRTF committees to highlight programs or specific needs that may be worthy for funding, and the process of completing the IPRTF Project Request form.

7. [Status of involuntary treatment at the Crisis Stabilization Center, including law enforcement and emergency medical services drop-off](#)

This item was not discussed.

8. [Other Business \(01:26:15\)](#)

King reported on a discussion of the possibility of having more than two joint meetings per year.

9. [Public Comment \(01:30:08\)](#)

Alyson Batchelder-Bestle spoke about being available to answer questions about reentry services in the jail, as she used to provide those services. She is now with Brigid Collins, and they have a small reentry program for their clients.

10. [Adjourn](#)

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.