

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: Joint Meeting of the Behavioral Health Committee and the Legal and Justice Systems Committee

Meeting Summary for September 20, 2022

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

1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Mike Parker called the meeting to order at 11:32 A.M. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar.

Members Present: Doug Chadwick, Chris Cochran, Bill Elfo, Brian Estes, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, David Freeman, Stephen Gockley, Dan Hammill, Mike Hilley, Raylene King, Jackie Mitchell, Perry Mowery, Mike Parker, Darlene Peterson, Donnell Tanksley, Courtney Taylor, Brien Thane, Maia Vanyo

Members Absent: Nathan Bajema, Seth Fleetwood, Deborah Hawley, Jenn Lockwood, Eric Richey, Michael G. Smith, Bruce Van Glubt,

2. [Whatcom Community College Substance Use Disorder Professional \(SUDP\) Program \(01:53\)](#)

Tory Sandoz of Whatcom Community College gave a presentation on the college's Substance Use Disorder Professional Program. Main points of the presentation included:

- They have three options, a certificate, an associate program, and a 15 credit program for those who already have a Masters' level degree.
- Definition of a substance use disorder and how it effects the brain.
- Methadone and other medication assisted treatment.
- The role of Substance Use Disorder Professionals (SUDPs) and what they are legally allowed to do.
- Overview of job availability and wage expectations in Whatcom County. They expect that jobs opportunities will grow rapidly as demand increases.
 - Parker asked if the wages are enough to keep people in the field. Sandoz replied that people tend to come into the field for the work rather than the wages. The working conditions make more of a difference than the wages. Taylor added that she sees a lot of conversations surrounding wages and that they have to be higher in order for workers to be able to pay the bills. Members continued to discuss wages, the cost of living in the area, the role the managed care organizations play, the demands of the job, possible strategies to get staff to stay in Washington, training for dual diagnoses, and Medicaid reimbursement.
 - Hammill asked who the providers in the area are and Sandoz listed some that she could think of at the moment.
- Eligibility requirements for SUDP Certification. There are education, experience, exam, and other requirements.
- How prospective students can apply to the program.
- Starting in Fall 2023, Whatcom Community College will be offering a Bachelor of Applied Science in Social Work program.
- Out patient programs do not have family/friend support programs, which, when provided, have better outcomes

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Members discussed the presentation including how to address the needs brought up, the possibility of writing a letter to state and federal legislators, the importance of family group therapy, and the utilization of twelve step programs.

Members agreed to add an agenda item to the next Steering Committee to continue to work on a letter to legislators and/or the Health Care Authority regarding the issues brought up during the discussion.

3. Court Childcare Programs: Spokane County and King County models (45:07)

Amy Knapton of the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery spoke to the group about the Children's Waiting Room program her organization runs at the Spokane County Courthouse. The program has been around for a number of years and her organization recently took it over as the provider. They can care for any children whose caregivers are on the courthouse campus for any reason including jury duty, court dates, meetings with attorneys, jail visits, etc. They can take up to eight children at a time for up to eight hours a day. The goal is to allow the caregivers to focus on whatever they need to accomplish while they are on the courthouse campus. Because the caregivers are technically still on-site, they do not need to be a licensed childcare facility. Committee members discussed the program amongst themselves and with Knapton. Topics included:

- How a similar program can be replicated. Knapton discussed licensing requirements, budgets, types of centers, and work they are doing with others across the state and the nation.
- The Rising Strong program in the Spokane area. Knapton went over her understanding of the program and said that Vanessa Behan has interactions with some of the same families.
- Whether or not respite licensing could be done with an existing childcare center. Knapton said that it was certainly possible, but there is a lack of availability in childcare centers. She also mentioned that volunteers could be relied on to provide care.
- Childcare needs for probation appointments. Jake Wiebusch said that he could see a need.
- Funding and what sources were the most important. Knapton said that the Children's Waiting Room program is contracted through the County. She also stated that they recently increased wages for their childcare staff, which they found to be essential. Richey stated that the community is working on a flexible funding program right now to fulfill some of the childcare needs within the court system.

4. Other Business (01:09:06)

Estes asked what the evaluation strategy is for the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and the Ground-level Response And Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) programs and if they were tracking outcomes. Mowery suggested inviting Malora Christensen to a future meeting to discuss metrics and outcomes for the programs. Hilley added that dashboards will soon be available with data on GRACE. Flaherty emphasized the need for a data dashboard, ideally one that focuses on equity and community-wide safety.

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Parker suggested they re-visit the topic of the advocacy opportunities that they started discussing earlier in the meeting. Hammill said that simply writing a letter would not be enough and suggested that they invite key decision makers to the Task Force meetings to discuss wages and reimbursements. Members conferred about who would be best to invite to the discussion and how best to move forward.

5. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:01 P.M.