

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: INDEX Committee

Meeting Summary for August 3, 2023

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Due to the lack of a quorum of its members, the INDEX Committee did not have an official meeting. A summary of the discussion of the members present is below.

1. Discussion of Potential Survey of Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services about Use of the Anne Deacon Center for Hope Crisis Stabilization Facility

Raylene King said it was brought to her attention that the Anne Deacon Center for Hope is being underutilized by law enforcement and EMS. The idea of creating a survey for law enforcement and EMS about their use of the Center was proposed at a previous meeting. The goal of the survey would be to identify the issues causing underutilization and to better understand people's awareness of the Center as a resource.

Members discussed some potential reasons for the Anne Deacon Center's current underutilization by law enforcement and EMS. Length of time required for intake, lack of space, and restrictive behavior criteria were some of the issues described.

King stressed that some of the smaller Whatcom County agencies might not know what the Center does or how to utilize it. Wendy Jones said a first step might be to provide concrete information about the Center and its requirements to these groups as well as other community support resources such as Narcotics Anonymous (NA), National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), etc. Once awareness has been raised, a survey might be given to Anne Deacon Center staff to better learn what types of challenges they face in admitting individuals referred by law enforcement or EMS.

Members discussed additional data they would like to see collected, including where most people who utilize the Center are coming from (Bellingham, small cities, other areas of Whatcom, etc.) and how many people are turned away from the Center and why.

One member of the public, Jason Nefores, spoke and encouraged follow up with individuals who use or want to use the services at the Anne Deacon Center to learn more about their experience.