

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: INDEX Committee

Meeting Summary for October 5, 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. Potential Surveys of Providers, Users, and of Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services about Using the Anne Deacon Center for Hope Crisis Stabilization Facility (0:50)

A previous meeting centered on the possibility of creating a survey for providers, users, and first responders regarding use of the Anne Deacon Center for Hope. The goal of the survey would be to better understand how it's being used, what people know about the Center, and why it is not being used.

2. Health and Community Services Dept. Response Division Data Tracking Efforts (14:29)

Malora Christensen, Manager of the Response Systems Division, spoke about the work being done by the Health Information Assessments (HIA) team, which is focused on collecting and analyzing data. Response Systems is in charge of operating GRACE, LEAD, Mental Health Court, and the Alternative Response Team (ART); they are also launching a co-responder program with the Sheriff's Office, and they have a nurse practitioner program as well. Christensen described some developments and changes in the Response Systems Division that have improved their data collection and analysis capabilities.

This year, the division has been focused on developing data sharing agreements (DSAs) with EMS, the Sheriff's Office, Bellingham Police Department, and PeaceHealth.

Jeremy Morton, the Informatics Specialist for the Response Division, provided an overview of how data from various systems (Sheriff's Office, legal system, EMS, etc.) interact. In the past, there was no way to see how individuals interact with these various systems over time. However, Morton is working to build the information infrastructure to allow for better understanding of these systems and how they are functioning as a whole. Morton shared examples of the types of data that is gathered and explained how having access to a broader picture will allow the public and various agencies to see the impacts systems are having on individuals in the community that are interacting with them.

Christensen provided an example from the Alternative Response Team. A year ago, in a 3-month period, there were 96 community connector incidents; 13 of were referred back to law enforcement, and 64 to ART. In the same 3-month period this year, there were 327 community connector incidents. Only 3 were referred back to law enforcement, and 305 went to the alternative response team. Christensen said this data is the type needed by policy makers to determine whether programs are working.

Amy Fuller, Performance Management Specialist, provided information on the role of program evaluation at Health and Community Services. To evaluate public health programs, Health and Community Services uses a standard logic model. Fuller highlighted the need for standardized data collection and the role of data in evaluating program outcomes and community impact.

One member of the public, Jason Nefores, provided public comment.