

Judicial & Law Enforcement Task Force Meeting Summary – September 9, 2015

Persons Present: Rusty Antel, Chair; Judge Bob Aulgur, Judge Kim Shaw, Sheriff Kevin Bond (Pettis County); Judge Mike Bradley; Captain Keith Hoskins; John Esterly; Mary Epping; Lisa Thomas; Columbia City Councilperson Mike Trapp; Janet Thompson.

Sheriff Bond told about Pettis County's efforts on these issues. They began with an ad hoc group three years ago, with discussions about the reduction/loss of psychiatric beds in their community and in the region and the impact on the 96 hour commits. They began with the Pettis County Mental Health Coalition and added other groups and stakeholders to the process as they moved forward. Since the Stepping Up initiative has begun, they have added more groups, as they identified who was missing from the table, including the Health Center and the Public Defender's Office and consumer groups. As a group they have watched the webinars and worked through the modules created in them. They have created subgroups to begin working through some of the questions presented and they have utilized a basic questionnaire to identify the mental health status of those coming into the jail. Of those inmates who bond out, they have found 13% self-report mental health issues (or are identified as such through medications etc), and of those who remain in the jail, 16% have mental health issues. Of these groups, the recidivism rate is much higher (93%) than those who do not identify as having mental health issues. They have begun to create service agreements with providers so that they can share information about the inmates and not violate HIPPA. The Pettis County probate judge has adopted standardized procedures. The Sheriff is working toward having officers CIT trained. The community health center is now willing to take direct referrals.

The group then discussed what Captain Hoskins had discovered in his meeting with the Chief Nursing Officer, Deb Pasch, and her staff, at MUPC. As an aside, Sheriff Bond noted that his officers, who bring folks to MUPC, often wait 4-6 hours until they can leave the patient with the medical providers. Keith reported that they are planning to get him the next (and maybe final) draft of their new protocol to cut down or eliminate the time spent in the ER awaiting a medical checkup by October 1st. Rusty and Janet asked if there would be any possibility of following up on Kathy Fluesmeier's idea that perhaps University security officers could take over from the Sheriff or the City Police and thus get those officers back on the street/road/job.

The group discussed at some length that, because of the dearth (or reported dearth) of psych beds, mental health facilities often/sometimes refuse to take patients despite a court order in the hands of law enforcement. It was decided not to raise this issue right now with MUPC but to keep that issue cued up for discussion. Judge Bradley and Judge Aulgur indicated willingness to participate in that discussion with the mental health care providers.

The group discussed the need for additional "social work" services, to help with discharge planning, which would include all varieties of "bus passes" (transportation/help with coordinating appointments/etc). It was acknowledged that, while Boone County is fortunate to have the services within the Jail that we have, there is a need for additional social workers or folks who can provide those services. Mike Trapp suggested that techs could be hired to perform some of these services at a much lower rate. Lisa Thomas suggested that interns be utilized as well. Keith noted that from the jail's perspective, six to ten people each week need help with planning for discharge/bonding out. Sheriff Bond noted that these kinds of services are critical in reducing recidivism.

The group also discussed the need to intervene in the cycle early on—at the point of the first arrest for a person. The group acknowledged that crisis prevention at that point is a better use of resources than later interventions. Sheriff Bond spoke to the spiral downward for those people for whom there is no service early on and stated that the spiral downward manifests in an escalation of offenses and the use of many more resources.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be October 28, 2015. Location will be announced soon.