



Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force

YEAR ONE IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCAP Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force

Implementation Report and Recommendations

August 6, 2017

Introduction: During the CCAP Fall Conference in November 2015, the membership adopted a priority calling for the development of a plan for comprehensive behavioral health reform as frustrations continue to grow over the increasing number of inmates whose unaddressed behavioral health needs are the catalyst to their entry into the criminal justice system. These issues had been a priority for several years, and while progress had been made in a few areas, counties are still largely stymied by the lack of resources for treatment and the lack of a comprehensive state or federal approach. CCAP membership tasked the Human Services and Courts and Corrections Committees with studying causes, considering best practices, educating members on the issue as well as identification of barriers. For 2016, the committees jointly developed and advanced to the members a renewed approach which charged a newly constituted Task Force with development of a comprehensive strategy.

The CCAP Human Services and Courts and Corrections Committees identified a concept for comprehensive behavioral health reform advanced to the full membership. Once the priority was adopted, CCAP President Bob Thomas determined that a Task Force approach would best facilitate the review needed for the committee to define the parameters of reform. He appointed CCAP Human Services Committee Chair George Hartwick and CCAP Courts and Corrections Committee Chair Kevin Barnhardt as co-chairs to facilitate the work of the group, and asked each chair to select members to serve on the Task Force comprised of commissioners to study the issue and develop findings. The CCAP human services affiliates with interest in behavioral health were asked to join as advisory members, and Task Force members included key staff from their counties to provide expertise and collaboration. This structure was designed to assure a rapid turnaround of a plan that could begin implementation in 2016.

The Task Force is comprised of commissioners recruited by the co-chairs to serve for the first six months of 2016. Commissioners were permitted to appoint county staff of their choice. Staff support was provided by PACA MH/DS Executive Director Lucy Kitner, and PACDAA Executive Director Michele Denk, JDCAP Executive Director Wayne Bear, Insurance Programs Legal Counsel Barb Zemlock, Executive Secretary Lori Dabbondanza, CCAP Policy Intern Laura Bleiler, and the CCAP Deputy Director, Brinda Penyak.

The Task Force was charged with development of a plan that considers specific areas included in the priority and making recommendations in its final report including concerns of veterans in the criminal justice system, availability of Medicaid and other coverage as well as medication upon release, structures for inmate qualification for health insurance, availability of diversion

programs at the local level, capacity for community behavioral health treatment services, the role of crisis intervention, staff training, potential for regionalization of critical service beds, risk management considerations, use of assessment tools and the use of data to drive placement decisions. The Task Force focused on understanding the needs of special populations and the benefits of adopting gender responsive approaches.

The Task Force met once monthly between March 2016 and June 2016 to consider each topic identified within the priority, and presented a final comprehensive plan to the CCAP membership during the CCAP Annual Conference in August 2016. The Task Force scheduled presentations on various topics to inform the final comprehensive report including legislative proposals, educational recommendations, networking opportunities or facilitation of options for regional collaborations, development and sharing of best practices, or other recommendations.

In August 2016, the CCAP Board of Directors adopted the report of the Task Force, and took action to continue the Task Force with a new charge – to help counties implement the recommendations through education, enhance communications on the issues that create barriers to establishing effective solutions, and address public policy matters that prevent counties from meeting goals for reducing and eliminating jail as the primary option for offenders with mental health and substance abuse problems. York County Commissioner Susan Byrnes was named as vice chair, and Berks County Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt was reappointed as chair for 2016-2017.

The Task Force began meeting the charge of the board with a breakout session during the 2016 CCAP Annual Conference to release the report and discuss recommendations. Meeting at least once monthly, often by conference call, the Task Force set out an agenda for educational programs for members, conducting webinars on a regular schedule to focus on each recommendation. The Task Force also engaged with stakeholders to expand knowledge of the report recommendations to our potential partners who will be needed as key partners going forward. Through those efforts, the Task Force has learned that, while progress is being made, much is yet to be done to engage more counties in the mission of creating plans for their own needs, and to achieve policy support at the state and federal level.

This update to the board will discuss those specific efforts as well as outline recommendations for the Association, CCAP Human Services and Education and the CCAP Courts and Corrections Steering Committees, CCAP members to consider for adoption as association policies and priorities, and for ongoing member engagement and education.

The Task Force thanks the CCAP Board and CCAP members for their support and participation in this important effort.

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Activity Report

Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force

2016- 2017 Calendar of Events

The Task Force activities since the release of the report have been extensive, with monthly events for planning, and educational offerings for members.

CCAP continues to consistently hear from counties that inmates with mental health and substance abuse issues are a significant problem in their jails. For several years, the CCAP membership adopted a priority around these issues, but little progress was made, as the opportunities and barriers encountered by counties prevented a comprehensive set of solutions. Additionally, frustration mounted as much of what would have to occur for counties to make progress was outside of county control. Cost increases forced counties to want a more substantial set of solutions and policy goals. Topics of the study set by the members in the priority included diversion, re-entry, alternatives to incarceration, bail, issues with veterans, pre-trial services, evidence based practices, use of medications, etc.

In 2016, this priority was transformed when then CCAP President Bob Thomas of Franklin County appointed a Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force and tasked them with a specific set of instructions to begin placing some organization around county goals and needs, and to create a plan for moving forward. The Task Force was comprised of ten commissioners from our Courts and Corrections and Human Services Committees, and was co-chaired by the chairs of those committees. The Task Force was assisted by an advisory panel comprised of county staff level experts, and others who work closely with them to assure we understood and applied best practices in each area, and included their perspectives on whether the recommendations could be achieved.

The Task Force met once a month for six months and held intensive explorations with key experts to gain understanding of the problems as well as solutions. One particular group of speakers actually brought our group to tears, as we explored trauma and its impact on incarcerated women, juveniles, and those with autism or other developmental disorders. We developed a dashboard that was updated after each meeting to keep track of the discussions and the decisions that were made as we moved along. We actually included the dashboard in the report, finding it so helpful that we thought it might be useful to counties as they embark on their own strategies.

Kevin Barnhardt named as a co-chair for that inaugural year, and worked along-side Dauphin County Commissioner George Hartwick in the development of a plan of approach, and later a product for counties to use as their road map. Now moving into year two with a comprehensive report as their guide, Commissioner Barnhardt is pleased to be leading the Task Force in helping counties with the implementation of strategies outlined in our report. The Task Force is pleased

to provide an update and progress report to help counties become engaged around this significant local challenge.

The report is focused on six specific goals –

- Encouraging counties to employ successful strategies to reduce the need for incarceration
- Expanding training, education and awareness efforts to improve public perception and understanding
- Providing effective supports and services to reduce entry into the criminal justice system and to improve outcomes for re-entry
- Understanding special populations and unique circumstances
- Addressing the needs of returning veterans
- Researching larger policy issues and developing longer range policy strategies to assist county efforts

Under each goal is a list of objectives containing detail on the solutions counties believe to be most effective. To the trained eye, the objectives actually follow the sequential intercept model, a nationally recognized “process” for identifying the encounters along the continuum of services and within the criminal justice system where intercepting individuals with substance abuse or mental health issues can lead to effectively diverting them from the system. This organization was utilized to make it easier for counties to share and encourage their county partners to participate in the development of a local plan of approach, ultimately reducing the incarceration of those with mental illness and substance abuse while assuring public safety.

The objectives in the report then list out very specific recommendations which suggest actions for commissioners, CJABs, judiciary, state and federal policy change, training, risk management, public education and media engagement. There are no significant breakthroughs in the report, but this represents the first time that the ideas are arranged in a comprehensive manner that is not written like an academic report, but rather a blue print for counties to follow in approaching their issues locally.

The CCAP Board agreed to continue the Task Force beyond the originally intended six months. The Task Force members felt there was more to do in providing education for members, communication for the public and providing members with options for approaching their constituents to gain support, and for improving buy-in from partners that will best lead to the ability to find resources to solve problems.

The report itself runs about 120 pages, including the links to each area of study and best practices, the meeting agendas and handouts, and the recommendations listed in detail. There is also an executive summary that is 13 pages long. Both can be found on the CCAP website by clicking on “Government Relations/Legislative Action Center.”

Since the CCAP Annual Conference, the direction of the Task Force has been focused on implementation. The Task Force continues to meet at least monthly, sometimes in person and sometimes via conference call. At the CCAP Fall Conference, The Task Force conducted a breakout session called "Where Do I Begin" which provided counties with basic information on gathering baseline data and how to use it before launching into planning mode. Then in late fall, the Task Force conducted a webinar which featured a team from Bucks County who recently went through a detailed county planning process. The webinar demonstrated the process used by the county and how the staff engaged to develop their plan.

In December the Task Force met via conference call with Judge John Zottolla, Allegheny County, who is the chairman of the PCCD Mental Health and Justice Committee to get his suggestions on how to plan an approach to commissioner/judge relationships. The judge suggested an interaction with the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts and in January, the Task Force meeting was held in person to engage several members of the judiciary and the AOPC staff on relationships, cooperation, and treatment courts, consistent with the recommendations in the report.

In February, the Task Force conducted a webinar for counties to learn how to use the process for rapid enrollment of inmates in Medicaid, which is an interim process available while the Department of Human Services develops a means of suspension versus termination.

The Task Force has also developed a plan for regional trainings for county teams that will be held through the summer. The purpose is to engage the commissioners with other key county players – judges, DA's, probation staff, jail administrators, treatment staff and others, in creating a plan to meet the unique needs and considers the resources available within the county.

At the CCAP Spring Conference, a breakout session featured the basics of diversion programs – how to get started. A Berks County Team provided day to day guidance for how they operate and achieve the outcomes of their diversion program.

The Task Force directed the development of a [Communications Tool Kit](#) for counties to utilize to begin introducing the concepts to their local media – helping your constituents understand why they should pay attention to efforts to keep those with mental illness and substance abuse out of the jail. There will be training on communications during the regional meetings. This issue of the CCAP [County News](#) magazine also features that tool, which will be provided to counties in the very near future.

An issue of the *County News* magazine will feature a series of articles that demonstrate the success of elements of the report. There will also be an activity update in that edition of the news.

The Task Force continues to be a very effective means of engaging our members in efforts that will help all counties be more effective in reducing the incarceration of those with mental health and substance abuse in our jails. We are partnering with NACo and the Council of State

Governments to promote county commitment to the National “Stepping Up” Initiative. “Stepping Up” Counties have adopted resolutions committing to take specific local steps that are known to provide a backdrop for community based alternatives to incarcerating those with mental health and substance abuse issues, and to avoid using jails for this population. A recent publication on the topic asks counties six key questions, which will further assist in understanding what must occur at the local level and how that will pay off.

The Task Force will continue providing educational support for counties and assistance in the area of strategic communications on the topic, and will feature counties who have experienced successes as a result of their efforts. A progress report is planned for each CCAP conference.

In closing, Task Force members and advisors are honored to have had the opportunity to provide leadership for counties in this area, and to work directly with counties struggling with getting started. The Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force members understand that our best option for addressing this challenge is through education and dedication to the best practices that are known to produce good outcomes, and sharing that knowledge through CCAP is a great way to assure that counties are supported.

Calendar of Events – 2016/2017

November 2016 – Fall Conference Breakout Session

“Where Do I Begin?” Understanding what county commissioners need to know in order to get started on developing a local strategy for addressing behavioral health concerns and the criminal justice system.

December 2016 – Webinar for CCAP Members/Affiliates

“Bucks County Strategic Planning” Bucks county presented on the process they used to develop a local strategy, including the personnel involved, timing, format, etc.

December 2016 – Judicial Relationships

Judge John Zottolla joined the committee to offer advice on a plan for judicial interaction.

January 17, 2017 – CBHTF Meeting

Focus on judicial relationships. The committee met with AOPC’s Tom Darr, Karen Blackburn, and members of the Trial Judges Committee to discuss education, relationship building, joint opportunities to encourage improved buy-in for local planning.

February 2017 – Medicaid enrollment webinar

Carl Feldman from the Pa. Department of Human Services conducted a webinar to explain the process for enrolling inmates upon release and the efforts to suspend vs. terminate benefits.

March 6, 2017 – CBHTF Monthly Conference Call

The Task Force met via conference call to hear policy updates, discuss strategies and considered a legislative communications plan

Justice Reinvestment 2 – Discussion and Update

The Task Force met via conference call to learn about a Dauphin County “Stepping Up” initiative and hear about the “Stepping Up” Six Questions – Webinar with Council of State Governments

March 27, 2017 – Breakout at Spring Conference on Diversion

Berks County presented a comprehensive session on their own diversion effort, including local police, county human services, etc.

April 2017 – Webinar – Communications toolkit

The Task Force sponsored a webinar on how to talk to constituents, the media, and policy makers about the need to avoid jail for mentally ill and substance abusing citizens. Communicating that we need to preserve jail space for the right people – tools for counties to use in talking with the public, the media, and policy makers were discussed.

May 16, 2017 – CBHTF Monthly Conference Call

The Task Force met via conference call and discussed adding educational opportunities including juvenile diversion, efforts focused on changes at front end of the system.

June 16, 2017 – Regional Meeting, State College

A regional event was held at Toftrees for county teams to learn more about using the suggestions in the report locally, and specifically to understand the risk related issues of having inmates who are mentally ill and/or substance abusing.

June 21, 2017 – CBHTF Monthly Conference Call

The Task Force met via conference call for planning purposes, and discussed trainings for annual conference, additional webinars, the state budget impacts on our efforts and federal policy issues.

July 17, 2017 – CBHTF Meeting – CCAP Office

The Task Force met in person for updates on educational programming recommendations and to develop a report for the CCAP Board, the Human Services Committee and the Courts and Corrections Committee to be delivered in August at the Annual Conference.

August 1, 2017 – CBHTF Webinar – Youth Mental Health First Aid

This webinar was conducted to help focus member efforts on programs that assist our youth, suicide prevention, linkages to access to services, and community based efforts to take a responsible approach.

August 7, 2017 – Avoiding Jail for the Mentally Ill: Tips for Local Dialogue – Breakout session @ CCAP AC, Erie

This session will focus on the local discussion – how to gain buy-in at home, how to talk with various audiences to gain support and understanding for county efforts as well as feature a panel of commissioners.

Remaining Meetings in 2017:

August 18, 2017 – CBHTF Monthly Conference Call

August 24, 2017 – Regional Meeting, Southwest, Westmoreland County

October 17, 2017 – CBHTF Monthly Conference Call

November 17, 2017 – CBHTF Monthly Conference Call

November 2017 – CCAP Fall Conference Breakout on housing, transportation and employment

December 19, 2017 – CBHTF Monthly Conference Call

Policy Initiatives

The Task Force monitored the efforts at DHS to move to suspension vs. termination. There are several stages to the project, which remains on track. Suspension vs. termination should be a reality within the next 12 to 18 months.

The Task Force continues to monitor efforts in Washington to change the Medicaid expansion parameters concurrent to repeal or replacement of the Affordable Care Act. Medicaid expansion has provided significant benefit to this population and has reduced the pressure on county base dollars as fewer individuals with mental health and substance abuse challenges fall through the cracks. A change in this policy would be significantly harmful to the efforts at avoiding jail as our recommendations support.

The Task Force was significantly concerned about the impact of state budget cuts contained in HB 218 when it left the House of Representatives. The budget cut or eliminated funding for key components of county court support that allow alternatives to incarceration, including intermediate punishment, adult probation and juvenile probation, among others. Efforts to educate the legislature and county peers were successful as the budget adopted restored nearly all of the funds cut in early versions.

The Task Force closely monitored budget funding for increased Naloxone efforts including funding for grant programs for first responders. Also, the budget contains funding to support specialty courts that utilize best practices and treatment models known to produce better outcomes.

The Task Force provided testimony at a House of Representatives hearing on pre-trial services and legislative proposals designed to expand their use in PA.

The Task Force worked closely with the Council of State Governments in the development of a PA Specific "Stepping Up" Conference which will be held in State College in December. The Task Force efforts to promote Stepping Up have been helpful in increasing the number of Stepping Up counties in PA by four to date in 2017.

Status of County Need

At the conclusion of year one after the release of the report, the Task Force is learning that the CBHTF Report and Recommendations have been of assistance to many counties, and to varying degrees. Some have used the report to engage other local partners. Some have used the report and other tools to open public dialogue. Some have used recommendations to find counties that have projects they may replicate and have made connections at the Commissioner and staff levels.

While some counties have made progress in local planning and collaboration, others have reached across their borders to find opportunities to collaborate on establishing facilities or programs that will focus on unmet need. Others have embarked on the development of data collection models, some engaging with the Data Driven Justice Initiative to find ways to link information sources to better focus resources and policies. Some have undertaken staff training initiatives, expanding into gender responsive policies or understanding the need to consider evidence based methods.

Counties have taken a closer look at risk and liability, understanding that many factors must be considered when the unique needs of those with mental health and substance abuse are under our care, and the need to collaborate with all jail based staff and third party providers to assure the best protocols are their standard.

Medication Assisted Treatment has expanded, and a number of counties have utilized grant opportunities to begin programs during incarceration, and case management post release to avoid relapse.

Still, counties are seeking that “magic bullet”, the one that actually does not exist, but is hoped to be able to provide a path forward. Knowing that counties still need significant support and assistance, the Task Force has been gathering information on the types of support and training that counties would find most useful.

The Task Force is confident that a 2018 implementation assistance plan would include educational opportunities that continue to expose them to the recommended activities, policies and practices contained in the report for what we believe is slow but incremental progress where counties are using their tools and skills to define local approaches.

More programming designed to encourage local collaborations and partnership should be a goal for the coming year. Focus on employment and housing as a key component of a successful re-entry plan, the use of gender responsive approaches, further refinement of communications strategies to gain buy-in, and the need to leverage other resources, such as grant funding and private partners, are all on the top of the agenda.

The Task Force recommends that the CCAP Board support their continuation in 2018, with a refreshed charge. The Task Force recommends that the current members and advisors be given

the option to continue, and other new members be added as interested CCAP members request that opportunity. The Task Force believes that the Committee Interest Form distributed to members should include the option to join the Task Force. The Task Force believes that another year of efforts should be carefully evaluated at the next annual conference to determine whether counties remain in need of extra support or if resources and opportunities exist to allow them to move forward on their own.

Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force

Goals for 2017-2018

The following is a list of goals established by the Task Force to be considered by the CCAP Board in determining future operations of the Task Force:

Goal 1 – All counties will know who is in their jail and know the percentage of population dealing with mental illness or substance abuse.

Goal 2 – All counties will be aware of the resources available within the criminal justice system and elsewhere to assist in the implementation of best practices for meaningful change in the administration of justice.

Goal 3 – All counties will work together with local partners to develop, share, and implement best practices and to help other counties understand the initiatives that lead to meaningful reform.

Goal 4 – All counties will understand the tools for pre-jail diversion and implement them effectively.

Goal 5 - All counties will understand the need to evaluate resources outside the scope of county commissioners and to find ways to approach barriers and obstacles.

Goal 6 – All counties will understand the sequential intercept model to be able to evaluate county practices and resources.

Goal 7 – All counties will understand the need to engage and invite their partners to discuss and evaluate resources, and to do so periodically to reflect changes in policy.

Goal 8 – CCAP will find an effective means of engaging the judiciary to focus on our common goals.

Recommendations for Future Educational Focus

The Task Force recommends that the educational agenda for 2017 and 2018 utilize Webinars on topics of interest wherever possible.

During 2016 and 2017, the Task Force sponsored webinars were consistently well attended and drew significant praise from attendees for their content.

The Task Force recommends consideration for regional training activities that tailor the agenda to the needs of the involved region.

The Task Force members recognize that some parts of the state are in a different place when it comes to the approach to the issues involved. Some have more resources, such as providers and bed space, where others might need to focus on those basic needs before more extensive planning can occur.

The Task Force recommends that offers of technical assistance, or connection to such resources be a focus for the coming year.

While still in the development phase, the Stepping Up Pilot focusing on linkages of data resources could be an example that other counties look to for improved use of data. This is just one example of technical assistance that could benefit counties. The Task Force would include a focus on defining those resources and educating members on their availability.

The Task Force recommends that linkages to grant opportunities and funding sources be an expanded part of their offering for members.

While counties may be ready and willing to embark on projects, the availability of start-up funds or sustainability can be an immediate barrier.

The Task Force recommends that their charge be expanded to focus on the development of linkages to other groups or associations that may be helpful to our efforts.

The Associations representing Wardens, District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Adult and Juvenile Probation, Court Coordinators, Trial Judges, MDJ's, Police Officers and others would be contacted to offer a presentation on the report as a means of expanding understanding and improving partnerships. The Task Force would develop a curriculum that is standard, but then enhance it for each audience.

The Task Force recommends that their efforts include a means of engaging health care providers and third parties who deliver health care in county jails.

Improved understanding of the findings in the report and acceptance of best practices will lead to better outcomes and reduce risk.

The Task Force recommends that the use of screening and assessment tools be an area of educational offerings for counties, especially focused on the different types of assessment and the uses for which they are most appropriate.

Counties vary significantly in the use of assessments and screenings and at all levels of the local justice system. This effort is designed to improve the understanding of the parties to help them find what is most effective for their unique needs.

The Task Force has not done enough to educate counties in the areas of housing, transportation and employment, which are key components to successful jail diversion and re-entry programs.

Sessions that focus on options, state and federal programs, partnerships and private engagement should be planned and conducted in the fall of 2017. Public private options, housing first initiatives, transitional housing, leveraging of other programs, and others are topics that would be covered through breakout sessions, regional events, and/or webinars. Creation of employment opportunities, connections to transportation, and creation of local supports would feature county based initiatives that others can replicate.

The Task Force recommends that suicide prevention in jails be a main educational focus in 2017.

Recognizing the difficulty of providing training on suicide prevention within the jail due to shift work and the costs of overtime would be the impetus behind the development of training models that can help ease county burdens. Cost effective approaches and screening and prevention are both key elements of this focus area.

The Task Force recommends that the *County News* dedicate one edition in 2017-2018 to programs and projects at the county level that follow the report recommendations.

As a means of further promoting county efforts, and encouraging others to use known strategies, the edition would be developed through contact with counties encouraging them to share their strategies. Best practices examples from counties of all sizes would be featured throughout the year, while the single yearly compilation would be developed for use as a permanent resource for counties.

CONCLUSION

On behalf of the CCAP Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force, we submit our report and recommendations for consideration of the CCAP Board of Directors. The Task Force members and advisors appreciate the opportunity to work on this important project and the ongoing support from the Board and Members of CCAP. We look forward to concluding the 2017-2018 Task Force work plan with a presentation demonstrating the gains made by counties that are assisted by the work of their peers.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Barnhardt, Chairman

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