

## MINUTES

### Task Force Concerning Mental Illness in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems

September 18, 2014  
10:00 a.m. to 12:30 pm  
Legislative Hearing Room B

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#### **I. Call to Order**

*Camille Harding – Healthcare Policy and Financing*

Ms. Harding called the meeting to order in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair of the task force.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve was entered. Minutes were approved as written.

#### **III. Presentation on Innovative Practices in Housing in Boulder County**

*Frank Alexander, Director, Boulder County Housing and Human Services*

The Colorado housing and human services agency and Boulder housing authority merged in 2009. This merger was the first of its kind in the US. The premise behind the merger was that multiple systems created too many silos for people to attain the services they need. The merger also coincided with the economic downturn, and agencies were experiencing significant deterioration of funding streams with rising economic needs. During that time, Boulder County also faced the two worst natural disasters in its history. In this way, the merger was a response to the need for cohesive assistance for people and also external factors that necessitated the consolidation.

The Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services (BCDHHS) follows a social determinants of health model, as health outcomes are not achievable without adequate attention to social determinants of health and population based outcomes across multiple systems based on data. BCDHHS studied a cross-section of the population and merged housing and human service functions with a focus on allocating housing resources in an integrative management fashion.

Mr. Alexander reviewed Boulder County's goals and implementation strategies to achieve common principles across systems and populations. These principles are family safety and preservation, front end prevention/intervention, housing stabilization, any door service linkage, work readiness and placement, and health coverage and linkage enrollment.

In addition, BCDHHS developed a "housing continuum" that would meet clients' needs through the consistent principles of applied case management. The agency's top priority was child welfare. They soon realized the need to move toward prevention-based child welfare practices. The goal was to never let a preventable finding be the reason that a child is not provided housing. Their housing stabilization program that incorporates direct allocation of hard units to child welfare families, vouchers, and tenant-based rentals has

been around since 2008. Mr. Alexander said they have helped 2000 households to date with that program.

The program also helped Boulder County address the issue of rising foreclosures in the midst of the economic downturn. Mr. Alexander showed the task force that the investment in the housing program a wise one compared to the costs of caring for a population without housing.

Mr. Alexander also showed the task force graphs that indicated the County's Child Welfare practice has reduced the out-of-home placement rate and also reduced the need for legal involvement for these families. Without the constraints of inconsistent housing and legal issues, families are able to focus on prevention and move to self-sufficiency quicker.

The tenant-based rental program in Boulder County is based on school districts. Two school districts determine which families are most at risk and need services. In the program, families pay 30% of their income for rent for two years. BCDHHS has seen better student attendance and movement through the school system due to this program.

Mr. Alexander then made recommendations to the Task Force to apply some of the methods and logic in examining mental illness issues in the criminal justice system. These recommendations were as follows:

- Establish collaborative local partnerships
- Develop a small pilot that could be modeled after integrated collaboratives
- Figure out how to measure success
- Incentivize or prioritize integrated collaboratives (i.e., share data systems, information, etc. in a truly integrative manner)
- Apply evidence-based practices to achieve goals and bring agencies on board

Mr. Alexander noted that the use of general fund resources is the best way to get started with this undertaking. He said that it will save dollars if the logic is applied appropriately. He recommended against trying to get federal funding for such a project, as this type of funding is not as flexible and carries many requirements. As savings are generated from other programs, funds can then be invested in other areas and federal funding options can be approached.

Melinda Cox commended Mr. Alexander for his work in spearheading HB 11-1196, which reduced a big barrier to what can be used to provide funding for children and created more flexibility for counties.

Mr. Alexander also recommended trying to address funding of physical housing for adults through getting a line item in a budget inside of the Division of Housing budget that would be tied to an RFP to local communities that would be modeled after SB 94 or HB 1451 collaboratives. Permanent funding streams can then be tackled (after jump starting with a budget line item).

Mr. Alexander recognized that change management is always difficult. The best way to support change management is through evidence and data to determine the true cost of services being provided and what is being saved through programs, which is more difficult to determine. Changing systems requires convincing people to take on additional community risk and prepare for what can be expected from higher profile initiatives. Providing staff with a cost benefit analysis can often provide the sense of urgency required to convince them of change. Showing passionate, well-trained people that they could get back to the core values about why they came to the industry in the first place often provides the best incentive for change.

Mr. Alexander has had conversations with Boulder Sheriff Joe Pelle and heard his assessment of jail beds, lengths of stay, populations, and issues the local jail is facing due to mental illness in the jail system. The operating and medical costs are beyond sustainability for the jail. To work with the justice system, Mr. Alexander said the agencies must rely on integrated collaboratives that already exist and speak about risks and rewards. It requires input from the criminal justice system and all representatives from agencies that may be awarded funding. He recommended giving the decision to justice agencies, school districts, etc. in order to make determinations about who is served by the programs.

Members of the task force voiced their appreciation for Mr. Alexander's presentation and Ms. Walton's vision in bringing this model and its possible application for the criminal justice system to the attention of the Task Force. Mr. Alexander was asked what steps he would recommend to begin to develop a similar approach to the issues the group is tasked with examining. He recommended the following:

1. Set forth manageable/attainable goals to be achieved.
2. Pursue a budget line item in Department of Local Affairs or a request to the Joint Budget Committee
3. Find seed money and award it to a small pilot program that includes a handful of collaboratives that could be built upon. These collaboratives must meet specific criteria and handle the case management. The Task Force would work with the participating agencies to determine measurables, especially for cost savings
4. Expand and reinvest cost savings into the initial pilots, or add more programs

Members of the Task Force recommended asking Mr. Alexander to the October meeting in order to discuss his recommendations further.

Mr. Alexander reminded the Task Force to prepare for any type of rental housing market (tight or not tight). He said that this preparation would require an evidence-based program with a deep connection to overall construction of affordable housing. The housing provided through support from BCDHHS is a combination of a number of types of rental (e.g., hard units owned by County Housing Authority, market-based rentals, etc.). BCDHHS works closely with landlords for an integrative collaboration. For a criminal justice pilot, Mr. Alexander recommended rental assistance with case-management supportive housing. Trying to build new housing for criminal justice populations would likely fail, according to Mr. Alexander.

Pat Coyle from the Division of Housing noted that in today's market there are people holding Section 8 vouchers who can't find units. He said that the least costly programs are education programs with landlords to get them past the fear factor. Mr. Coyle reiterated Mr. Alexander's assertions that landlords are an essential part of the collaboratives to be built and that building housing for specific communities takes a lot of time and is extremely costly, so much so that it likely would not be achieved.

*Next step: Ms. Harding will speak with Ms. Walton about next steps and the possibility of inviting Mr. Alexander to the meeting in October.*

**IV. Task Force Membership—Discussion/Action to approve candidates to be sent to the Camille Harding – Healthcare Policy and Financing**

Two applications were submitted for the mental health professional vacancy on the Task Force: Jacoba Rock and Lisa Thompson, who works for Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. The applications were distributed to the Task Force in August, and the nomination of members was tabled from the September Task Force meeting. Kathy McGuire announced that Ms. Rock is withdrawing her application and moved that Lisa Thompson be put forward to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Oversight Committee as the Task Force's recommendation to fill the mental health professional vacancy. The motion was seconded by Janet Drake and carried without opposition.

Gina Shimeall mentioned that Representative Wright is interested in becoming involved in the Task Force. While there is no foreseeable official vacancy that Representative Wright could fill at this time, his participation is always welcomed.

The Office of Behavioral Health has put forward a letter of recommendation for Moe Keller. More information was required by the Oversight Committee, so the consideration of Ms. Keller was delayed but is progressing.

*Next step: Chris Habgood will provide the Task Force with a recommendation for a community member with mental illness who has been involved in the criminal justice system or a family member from the Behavioral Health Planning & Advisory Council.*

**V. Update on the September 12<sup>th</sup> Legislative Oversight Committee Meeting**

*Sheri Danz – Office of the Child's Representative*

*Gina Shimeall – Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health Court*

Ms. Danz recounted the activities at the September Oversight Committee Meeting, where the draft legislation from the August 28 special meeting of the Task Force was circulated. The Committee voted to move the legislation forward but recognized there are changes required for the bill to pass. Senator Newell and Representative Rosenthal will sponsor the legislation.

Amanda King noted that Senator Newell and Representative Rosenthal will continue to work on the bill and will contact Ms. Walton to get members of the Task Force and key stakeholders involved. In addition, Ms. King's office has received a formal request for

data regarding the definition and evaluation of juvenile competency in other states. That information can be shared once her office has finalized it, but if there are further questions about the matter from Task Force members, they should be addressed to Ms. King or Ms. Walton.

The bill will go to the Legislative Council Committee in mid-October. If it is approved, it can be introduced, but there are no changes that can be made until after it is introduced and once the legislative session begins in January.

*Next Steps:*

*-Ashley Tunstall will update Dr. Martinez on this discussion*

*-Michael Ramirez will send data about other states to Ms. King and she will pass it along to the rest of the Task Force.*

**VI. Behavioral Health Transformation Council – Medication Consistency Group**

*Ashley Tunstall – Division of Youth Corrections, Department of Human Services*

The Behavioral Health Transformation Council's Medication Consistency Group has started to look at what medications are being used, why they are prescribed, and what barriers exist to continuing medications for criminal justice populations. Some challenges the group named are physical storage, data sharing, costs, and regulations. The Medication Consistency Group will reconvene in November.

**VII. Affordable Health Care Act**

*Camille Harding – Healthcare Policy and Financing*

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Department of Human Services, and Healthcare Policy and Financing (HCPF) have tried to work on statewide indicators as they pertain to child and adult health across the lifespan. Targets are narrowing and Ms. Harding Camille will share an update with the Task Force at a later date. She also will bring her findings about gaps in data collection to a future meeting of the task force.

A discussion concerning HCPF's attempts to address the challenges around the shortage of providers of Medicaid patients ensued. One incentive to providers has been an enhanced provider fee for those who would accept Medicaid. She noted that HCPF continues to try to find a way to address provider capacity but lacks the data infrastructure for it. Raw data of client surveys of behavioral health services and clinics should be available in November. Ms. Harding will provide it to the Task Force when it becomes available.

For criminal justice populations, Ms. Harding said HCPF does not have access to jail data, just Medicaid data. She said it would be worthwhile to see what data sets are available, especially in light of the presentation from Mr. Alexander. Harriet Hall noted that mental health centers hold data about primary care linkages and quality improvement efforts. Ms.

Shimeall suggested the Criminal Justice Reform Coalition be contacted to pursue the question of data sets available.

The State of the Health of Colorado report has been delayed. HCPF plans a “soft release” of the report developed for the State of the Health. Ms. Harding will provide this report prior to the next Task Force meeting.

Marc Condojani said that a provider performance scorecard is available on the Office of Behavioral Health web site and a monthly presentation is made to the director. While the scorecards are publicly posted, Mr. Condojani can provide the information to the Task Force for future discussion.

*Next steps:*

***-In addition to sending the State of the Health report to the Task Force, Ms. Harding will speak with RCCOs to see if they can provide specific sources for providers.***

**VIII. Discussion of Other Topics of Study**

- *Mental Health Crisis Centers—Dr. Harriet Hall*

Dr. Hall said the Mental Health Crisis Centers will roll out December 1. One of the components of the system – a statewide telephone line – is already operational.

Mr. Habgood told the Task Force there are three components to this effort: the statewide hotline, communications plan, and on-the-ground services. There is a 90-day period between when contracts are signed and services are provided. This time period would end in the early part of December. The communications plan is being developed. It includes messaging as services come online to speak about a coordinated crisis system. The hotline is available and has been advertised a little, but a bigger education effort will be released likely after the elections.

**IX. Election of Chair and Co-Chair to the Task Force**

Ms. Walton noted that she was re-elected to the Task Force in August. Current Vice Chair Michele Manchester has asked to step down from her position, but is still interested in serving on the Task Force.

Melinda Cox formally nominated Ms. Harding to serve as Vice Chair of the Task Force. The motion was seconded by Ms. Drake, and Dr. Hall moved to close the nominations. This motion was also seconded by Ms. Drake.

Members of the committee who were present voted on the nomination of Ms. Harding, and the vote carried without opposition.

**X. What’s Happening at Your Agency**

Task Force members provided updates about their various agencies.

***Meeting adjourned 11:59 a.m.***