

# WEEKLY POLICY SUMMARY:

## Law Enforcement Community Support for Mental Health Challenges

### March 29, 2019

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#### Praise For Law Enforcement's Handling Of Mental Health Challenges

1. [Battle Creek Enquirer](#): Seigal Washburn, a 36-year old Battle Creek, Michigan man, voluntarily enrolled in the Calhoun County Mental Health Court after being arrested on a domestic violence charge which ended a three-day drinking binge brought on by family problems. Washburn said his voluntary enrollment saved his life at his graduation ceremony, where he shook hands with his arresting officer. Around 15 people are enrolled in the program at any given time, and between five and eight graduate every year. The program is designed to provide treatment and support to people with severe mental illness.

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#### Reliance On Law Enforcement For Mental Health Needs

2. [WXOW](#): In La Crosse, Wisconsin, law enforcement officials have been working with community leaders to put together a Mental Health First Aid Training Day for the public. The event will take place on May 22, 2019 and will feature demonstrations and vital information in dealing with mental illness. Lieutenant Avrie Schott stated that "I think that we all live, work and go to school here, interact with one another so helping each other in the community that we live in is so important." Organizers are hopeful that it will become an annual event.
3. [The Inlander](#): In Spokane, Washington, police and mental health specialists have been working together on the Community Diversion Unit grant-funded program that pairs mental health workers with Spokane law enforcement to help get people suffering from addiction, mental illness, and homelessness connected to services and keep them out of jail and emergency rooms. Operational since summer 2018, the Community Diversion Unit currently consists of four full-time mental health clinicians from Frontier Behavioral Health who ride along with patrol officers five days a week, respond to 911 calls, and offer referrals to a variety of services, ranging from substance use disorder treatment to shelter beds.
4. [Chicago Tribune](#): The Kane County jail in Kane County, Illinois is planning to use vacant space for rehab and mental health programs. 18 correctional officers recently attended a one-month training program to become certified mental health officers. Kane County

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Judge Marmaie Kostelny, who handles the mental health court and drug court, said she' is excited for the "unique direction the sheriff is taking."

5. [NewsChannel 5 Nashville](#): Law Enforcement officials attended the 2019 National Council for Behavioral Health Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Patricia Costales, a social worker from California, stated that, "I think our law enforcement departments want to learn from our mental health professionals about how to do their job better." Dickson County, Tennessee Sheriff Jeff Bledsoe stated that, "we don't want to criminalize the needs of patients." Sheriff Bledsoe is leading an initiative, supported by other Tennessee sheriff departments, to create a law which would require police officers to transport mentally ill patients to a treatment facility if they are a threat to themselves or others.
6. [Beaumont Enterprise](#): In Texas, the Hardin County Sheriff's Office has joined the Assistance, Stabilization and Prevention Program run by mental healthcare facility Spindletop Center. The program brings law enforcement and mental health professionals together to, "identify, engage and provide services to individuals who have been diagnosed with persistent mental illness and who have had frequent encounters with local law enforcement." The Jefferson, Chambers, and Orange County, Texas Sheriff's offices, and the Beaumont Police Department are also members of the program.
7. [KYou](#): The Missouri Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) held a fundraiser to strengthen its partnership with local law enforcement, raising funds to provide further training for law enforcement on how to respond to mental health challenges in the community. Jason Klaus, a CIT member, explained that work with law enforcement is necessary because officers have the resources to better connect anyone in a mental crisis to the right local resource. The group is also hosting a fundraiser to increase mental health education efforts.
8. [Richland Source](#): Officers from Richland County, Ohio police department are being trained in their own Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), a collaborative effort between local law enforcement agencies and the mental health community to help law enforcement officers handle incidents involving people with mental illness. The program focuses on the need for advanced training and specializations with first responders, immediacy of the crisis response for those with mental illness, emphasis on officer and consumer safety, and referral for those in crisis to ensure proper mental health treatment, instead of incarceration. The CIT has trained almost 500 law enforcement officers and first responders since 2004.
9. [WLNS 6](#): Michigan State Senator Curtis Hertel Jr. (D) has been working with the Ingham County Sheriffs to increase mental health resources for inmates at the Ingham County Jail. Hertel stated during a Senate Appropriations hearing that "increasing funding for mental health treatment" is one of his top budget priorities for the state. Hertel also stated that, "We need to better prioritize the health of some of our most vulnerable residents, as well as the safety of our communities and law enforcement."

10. [The Norwood Post](#): The Center for Mental Health Crisis Walk-In Center, a new mental health facility in Montrose, Colorado, hosted its grand opening on Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. The Center will include a walk-in mental health clinic, a crisis stabilization unit, withdrawal management, a 24/7 regional crisis team, crisis respite services, and emergency peer transport. The Center has worked closely with local law enforcement officials and emergency service providers over the past several months to develop new referral protocols.

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*There is no recent activity.*