

WEEKLY POLICY SUMMARY:

Law Enforcement Community Support for Mental Health Challenges

April 26, 2019

Praise For Law Enforcement's Handling Of Mental Health Challenges

1. [The Grunion](#): The Long Beach, California Police Department has been increasing its efforts to constructively engage with those suffering from mental illness. The department already uses "[quality of life](#)" units when responding to incidents involving someone with apparent mental issues, which connect Long Beach's homeless population to resources and services available to them. The Department also includes programs to divert appropriately identified defendants to residential treatment programs in partnership with the county department of health and the Center for Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Long Beach Police Department also has partnered with The Guidance Center to have a certified clinician at the jail's booking facility to help diagnose and divert those with mental issues. The city also recently approved the first mental urgent care facility on Long Beach Boulevard, offering an alternative for police who have detained someone with mental problems.
 - The article also describes a report presented at the National Law Enforcement Summit in Los Angeles in November 2018. According to the report, the U.S. has 5% of the world's population, but 25% of the world's incarcerated population. In that group, more than half have mental health needs, the report says. The report also outlines that incarceration is one of the most expensive — and least effective — ways to handle mental illness issues, whether they are substance abuse-related or otherwise. A long list of recommendations is included in the report from the summit, including calls to coordinate community effort and resources starting with a multi-disciplinary group to develop and implement policies such as cross-training, shared databases, integrating 9-1-1 dispatch response with mental health crisis lines, and provide mental health education for every level of the system from beat cops to judges.
2. [News On 6](#): Tulsa County, Oklahoma's Community Response Team (CRT) has been renewed for a second year. The CRT is meant to help people in mental health crises, and trains teams of responders, which include a Firefighter/Paramedic, Police Officer, and Mental Health Professional, to respond to incidents involving individuals facing mental health crises. Statistics released by CRT show the team responded to more than 500 emergency calls and tried to reach nearly 100 people for a follow up from February 2018 to February 2019. CRT also diverted at least 36 individuals from going to jail or the emergency room and 18 individuals from going to psychiatric urgent care, decreasing

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additional trauma to those suffering from mental health challenges. "It's a team effort, so we come and talk to the patient or the person and then we pull together as a group and as a group, we make a decision on what's best for this person," said Capt. Bill Esmeyer of the Tulsa Fire Department who served on CRT.

- a. [Video](#) detailing Tulsa County's Community Response Team.
- 3. [Arizona Daily Sun](#): Officials from Coconino County, Arizona have been working to fight mental illness in the area. Law enforcement, government, health, education, and business community leaders have joined to form the Stronger as One Coalition, a group that aims to increase the knowledge base and local resources for mental health. Much of the coalition's progress so far has been made in the area of mental health first aid, driven by commitments from law enforcement and other communitywide organizations. Stronger as One's goal is to train 50,000 people on mental health first aid in five years across the five northern Arizona counties.
- 4. [Petoskey News-Review](#): The North Country Community Mental Health organization in Petoskey, Michigan announced that in honor of May as Mental Health Month, it will host a series of events to draw attention to the importance of mental health. One of the events, to be held on May 18th, will include a community discussion featuring law enforcement officials who will speak to how they deal with instances involving people with mental illnesses and what mental health resources are available for community members to use after a screening of the film, "Coming Up For Air," which highlights the importance of mental health care.



A poster promoting the North Country Community Mental Health Organization's "Mental Health Month" events for May.

- [WMUK](#): "Coming Up For Air" is a film which details the impact of mental health on families. Producer Roger Rapoport said that he consulted mental health experts, but also talked to parents and students to portray mental health problems in a realistic way.

Reliance On Law Enforcement For Mental Health Needs

5. [National Public Radio](#): In an effort to deal with the influx of inmates suffering from addiction, many jails are adding some form of medication-assisted treatment, or MAT, to help inmates safely detox from opioids and stay clean behind bars and after release. Jails in states hardest hit by opioids — including Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts — are moving fastest to expand this use of treatment, which is now widely considered the most effective method of treating opioid use disorder. The National Sheriffs' Association estimates that at least half to two-thirds of today's jail population has a drug abuse or dependence problem. The problem is particularly hard for jails in more rural and semi-rural counties, which often have limited access to medications, to physicians who will administer it, and to follow-up programs that inmates can tap into upon release. To provide methadone, for example, a jail has to either be certified as a methadone clinic or partner with a community clinic. "Even if [rural jails] wanted to provide medication-assisted treatment within the jails, there may not be a methadone clinic for 60 miles," says Carrie Hill, director of the National Sheriffs' Association's center for jail operations. "We are in a critical situation," added Peter Koutoujian, a leading voice on the issue and the sheriff of Middlesex County, Mass. — one of the states hardest hit by the opioid epidemic.
6. [Colorado Springs Independent](#): Law enforcement in Colorado Springs, Colorado, have been using a program called C WORX to train for responding to mental health calls. The program uses actors trained to play characters with mental health issues that range from substance-use disorders to schizophrenia, and provide a way for officers to practice de-escalation techniques in a safe, but realistic environment. Shale C. LePage, an actor for C WORX, said that, "If I could do this job every day, I would. Because this is the most beneficial work I've ever done." Officers who have been through the training said that they have a similar sentiment.



Colorado Springs Deputy Jim Dodge listens to an actor playing a woman who's locked herself in a bathroom as part of the C WORX program.

- a. [C WORX](#): C WORX has helped trained law enforcement departments in New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Oregon, Minnesota, and Arizona in ways to deal with someone having a mental health crisis. The program uses actors to simulate a person in a mental crisis, and offers classes in conflict management, de-escalation, negotiating, and mental health awareness. C WORX has been used for Police and Sheriff's departments, Crisis Intervention Teams, Cadets, SWAT Teams, Hostage Negotiators, and Dispatchers.
7. [Indiana University](#): The Indiana University Police Department announced that all campus officers will take a course in mental health first aid, which helps officers address volatile situations with someone who may be having a mental health crisis. The new training for IU Police Academy recruits and full-time officers will also help them address situations with someone who is upset and uncooperative. Officers said during focus groups that they wanted to stop carrying batons because they rarely, if ever, use them as intended; if they did, it might result in injury for the community member or the officer.
8. [Daily Journal](#): Kankakee County, Illinois received a grant to help pay for drug and mental health treatment through the county's drug court, which provides sentencing alternatives for those with addictions. Through 2023, the federal government will give \$2 million, or \$400,000 annually, for contractual drug and mental health treatment services. "A lot of the grants out there don't involve treatment. That's problematic because that's what people need," Sheriff Mike Downey said at a recent County Oversight Committee hearing. "This grant is going to address some of that."
9. [Omaha World Herald](#): Officials in Sarpy County, Nebraska are planning to build a short-term mental health crisis center where law enforcement officers can bring people who are experiencing a mental health crisis but don't belong in jail or a traditional hospital. The crisis center is expected to be available for use by all Sarpy County law enforcement agencies, as well as Cass, Dodge, Douglas and Washington Counties. An opening date has not been announced



The proposed location of the Sarpy County Mental Health Crisis Center.

10. [KTVB](#): The Western Idaho Community Crisis Center is opened on April 23 in Caldwell, Idaho to provide temporary behavioral health services to those in need. It will attempt to help save law enforcement time and costs as an alternative to bringing people suffering from mental illness to jail. The crisis center aims to take the burden off the community and provide an important resource for people in need.
 - a. [Video](#) detailing the community crisis center opening in Caldwell.
11. [Campus Safety](#): College and school campus and district administrators, mental health counselors, emergency managers, public safety and security professionals, and law enforcement officials will attend the Campus Safety Conference West in Las Vegas from June 17-19. The conference will address a wide range of critical K-12 and higher education safety and security issues, including suicide prevention, gang violence, transportation safety, sexual assault investigations, mental health, threat assessments, Clery compliance, lockdown, recovery and more. The purpose of the conference is to improve campus safety and collaboration from law enforcement, administrators, faculty, students, parents, and technology professionals on campus.

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There is no recent activity.