



Community Mental Health and Public Safety Preservation Millage

Public Safety Report: December 2018

Overview

For several years now the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) and Washtenaw County Community Mental Health (CMH) have worked in partnership to serve the growing population of incarcerated adults with mental health and substance use disorders and to prevent more of these individuals from entering the criminal justice system in the first place. To date, this work has entailed:

- **Law enforcement trainings.** All Sheriff's Office deputies, along with deputies from the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Police Departments, have participated in two-day, evidence-based Managing Mental Health Crisis trainings. Select officers from these agencies have also participated in advanced crisis intervention trainings.
- **Service expansions.** In 2016, jail-based mental health services were extended to more inmates and enhanced with increased psychiatric care and a stronger focus on preparing inmates for release and community reentry. A new mental health jail liaison was also hired to proactively identify and support inmates who require services.
- **Care coordination.** Interdisciplinary teams—including case managers, psychiatrists, corrections officers, and discharge planners—now meet regularly to review the needs of individual inmates and to coordinate care. The focus of these meetings is on stabilizing individuals while they are incarcerated and then planning for their successful discharge and community reentry.

Washtenaw County Diversion Council

In January 2019, Washtenaw County's Mental Health and Public Safety Millage will begin to provide significant resources to address mental health and substance use treatment needs, but community leaders have been working together to plan activities that complement this purpose for some time now.

In November 2017, the Sheriff's Office and Community Mental Health announced plans to launch a Mental Health Criminal Justice Diversion Advisory Council—a group of county stakeholders focused on developing a comprehensive, community-based diversion system for low-level, low-risk offenders suffering from severe mental health or substance use disorders.



This [Diversions Council](#) includes elected officials, educators, individuals with lived experience, and local leaders with expertise in mental health, substance use disorders, and the county's adult and juvenile justice and corrections systems.

Over the past several months, the Diversions Council has gathered and analyzed data from both the Sheriff's Office and Community Mental Health. This data shows stark disparities between the general inmate population and the population with mental health and substance use disorders. Using this data as a baseline, the council has established objectives for future work including:

- **Prevalence.** Reduce the number of county inmates with mental health and substance use disorders: *This rate increased from 24 percent in 2015 to 29 percent in 2017.*
- **Recidivism.** Reduce the recidivism rate for inmates with mental health and substance use disorders: *This rate was 58 percent in 2017, compared to just 29 percent for the general population.*
- **Length of stay.** Reduce the average length of stay for inmates with mental health and substance use disorders: *This rate was 27 days on average, compared to just 11 days for the general population.*

In addition, racial and economic disparities are prevalent throughout the correction system. The council hopes to diminish these disparities by enhancing prevention, treatment, and support services for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders.

Future investments

- **Training.** The two-day, evidence-based Managing Mental Health Crisis training will be extended to all officers, in all police agencies across the county, in 2019. A new training program will be offered to corrections officers, with a focus on evidence-based methods for humane management of inmates with mental health disorders.
- **De-escalation.** To reinforce the goals of de-escalation and peaceful resolution of conflict, Community Mental Health staff will be officially integrated into the county's Crisis Negotiations Team, part of its Special Threats Response Unit. In addition, the county will develop and launch a multi-disciplinary Crisis Intervention Team specially trained to respond to critical public safety events involving persons with mental health and substance use disorders.
- **Diversions.** In the summer of 2019, Community Mental Health will open [a new mental health observation location](#) for all Washtenaw County residents. Adjacent to the existing CMH offices in Ypsilanti, this location will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. In a comfortable setting, this facility will serve up to five individuals who require additional assessment, observation, and discharge support, helping to divert individuals from the criminal justice system.
- **Treatment.** A new mental health unit is being planned for the jail to house inmates with severe mental health illnesses. A therapeutic community housing unit, it will provide



specialized, intensive mental health treatment and coordinated programs for those who previously could not receive standard jail-based services.

- **Reentry.** The jail-based Community Mental Health services team will continue to provide discharge planning for inmates, but will develop new community partnerships and collaborations to expand post-discharge support in an effort to reduce recidivism and support successful community reentry.

Youth prevention

Much of the Diversion Council's public safety work to date has focused on improving services for adults in the criminal justice system. In 2019, council members will work with stakeholders to explore similar opportunities in the juvenile justice system.

In collaboration with children's services, the juvenile court, school district leaders, and other key stakeholders, the council will map existing community resources, pressing service gaps, and opportunities for improved service coordination between mental health, substance use, juvenile justice, and school professionals. Findings will be shared with the community at the conclusion of the mapping process to inform future work.

Stay informed

To be notified of millage investment priorities, millage job postings, new prevention programs, requests for proposals, and outreach activities, [sign up for periodic updates](#) from Washtenaw County Community Mental Health.

Remember

If you or someone you know needs support, please call 734-544-3050.