



Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force

A guide for counties seeking alternatives to incarcerating mentally ill and substance abusing offenders

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The Problem

- Difficulty maintaining services
- Lack of funding resources for jail staff
- Reduced capacity for forensic services within state hospitals
- The current opioid and prescription drug crisis limits services in jails

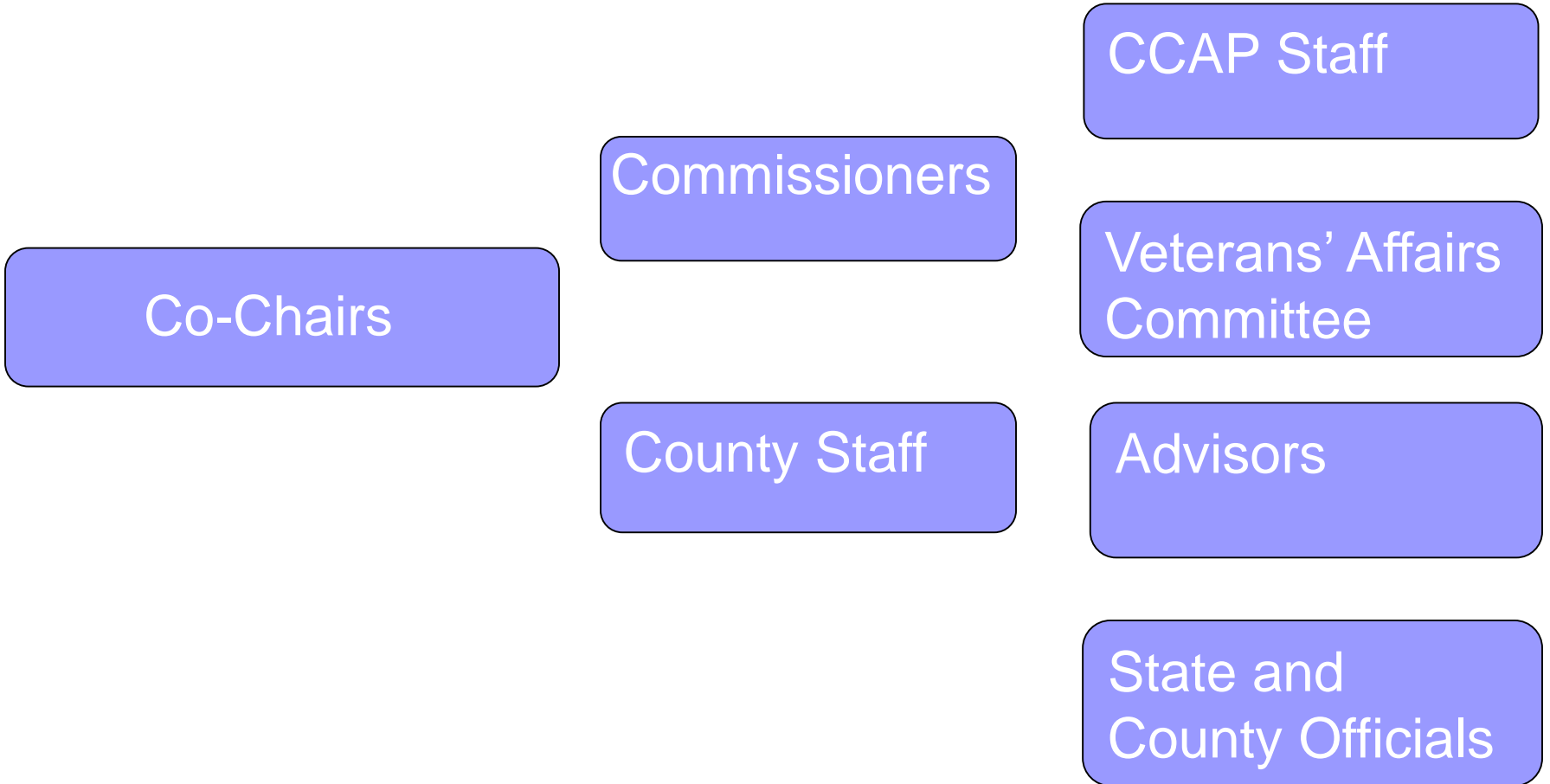
Financial Impacts

- Counties spend \$100 billion / year for inmate health services
- The average cost of incarceration: \$40,000 / year
- Untreated mental illness and/or substance abuse leads to cycles of recidivism
- As of 2014, Pennsylvania had the highest rate of incarceration in the northeastern U.S.

Call to Action

- CCAP membership adopted a priority calling for the development of a plan for comprehensive behavioral health reform in November 2015.
- By 2016 the Human Services and County Courts and Corrections Committees had formed a taskforce to develop comprehensive strategies and best practices going forward.

Task Force Structure



Areas of Consideration

In the monthly meetings from March – June 2016, the following topic areas were addressed:

- Availability of medication upon inmates' release
- Medicaid and health insurance eligibility
- Diversion programs
- Risk Management
- Crisis intervention
- Improved staff training
- Addressing veterans' issues and needs

Goal One

Goal 1. Encourage counties to employ successful strategies to reduce the need for incarceration.

Objective

- Develop Effective Diversion Programs

Objective

- Apply Sequential Intercept Mapping

Objective

- Utilize Medication Assisted treatment as a diversionary measure

Goal One

Overview of Key Strategies for Goal One

Strategies:

- Support pilot programs like evidence-based pre-trial programs, L.E.A.D., and community supervision
- Counties and other agencies should engage in comprehensive Sequential Intercept Mapping exercise
- Determine the need and readiness for implementing Medication Assisted treatment protocols

Goal Two

Goal 2. Expand training, education and awareness efforts to improve public perception and understanding

Objective

- Counties will improve risk management practices related to inmates with behavioral health issues

Objective

- Improve staff training in jails and juvenile facilities, and police departments

Objective

- Improve Education and Awareness for public, stakeholders, families, providers, commissioners, policy-makers

Goal Two

Overview of Key Strategies for Goal Two

Strategies:

- Evaluate all policies and procedures regarding formularies and drug distribution to inmates for best outcomes
- Support cross-jurisdictional training programs on evidence-informed practices but also provide implementation guidelines
- Develop local media materials and talking points to be shared with counties for their use with local media.

Goal Three

Goal 3. Provide effective supports and services to reduce entry into the criminal justice system and to improve outcomes for re-entry.

Objective

- Assure available, affordable housing with supports for re-entering inmates and those identified for diversion

Objective

- Warm handoffs at emergency departments

Objective

- Implement Suspension vs. termination, and rapid enrollment at the time of release, and expand Medicaid eligibility

Goal Three

Overview of Key Strategies for Goal Three

Strategies:

- Work with the DOC to create innovative housing programs.
- Continue develop and implement [warm hand-off projects for overdose survivors](#).
- Continue working toward a rapid restoration process, and expanding eligibility.

Goal Four

Goal 4. Understanding Special Populations and Unique Circumstances

Objective

- Successful diversion from jail and reduced recidivism for veterans

Objective

- Meeting the needs of juvenile populations

Objective

- Encourage counties to see the value of gender-specific response

Objective

- Promote techniques for developmentally disabled population

Goal Four

Overview of Key Strategies for Goal Four

Strategies:

- Work with local law enforcement on strategies for veterans' diversion and crisis intervention techniques.
- Build collaborative agreements between human service, educational, and supportive service programs for juvenile inmates
- Expand pilot programs for a gender specific approach, and provide training for its implementation
- Provide training in identifying at risk individuals, and develop diversionary protocols for individuals with developmental disabilities

Goal 5. Address the Needs of Returning Veterans

Objective

- Develop a community approach to assisting returning veterans and create supports and linkages.

Goal Five

Overview of Key Strategies for Goal Five

Strategies:

- Encourage businesses to consider hiring veterans, and work to develop strong public private partnerships.
- Create collaborative opportunities to expand understanding and coordination between the support systems available.
- Raise the awareness of families of veterans to the services that are available at the county level, prior to the return of the veteran from service

Goal 6. Research larger policy issues and develop longer range policy strategies to assist county efforts

Objective

- Improve the availability of data in the criminal justice realm, and establish linkages between the human services system data and jail admission/inmate treatment data

Objective

- Explore the linkages between indigent defendants access to effective public defense and potential for release on bail, length of time incarcerated pre-trial, and the length of sentence and probation.

Objective

- Explore recent CMS clarification on inmate eligibility for Medicaid to assure that PA permits every possible option for covering inmates

Goal Six. Research Larger Policy Issues and Develop Longer Range Policy Strategies to Assist County Efforts

Objective

- HIPAA and privacy rules must not be a barrier to providing assistance

Objective

- Explore the relationship between funding for education and involvement with the criminal justice system for potential future policy position development by CCAP.

Objective

- Fully explore the benefits of prevention and the extent to which funding challenges force counties to focus on immediate needs rather than invest in prevention

Goal Six

Overview of Key Strategies for Goal Six

Strategies:

- Explore opportunities available through the Whitehouse Office of Technology [Data Driven Justice Initiative](#) that address behavioral health and the potential benefits of partnering together
- Review recent state level activities where, until recently, public defense was funded by counties to determine whether similar legislative or policy efforts could be employed in PA.
- Consider the use of [evidence based and promising prevention practices](#), such as Justice Reinvestment II, to create new opportunities to find dollars for prevention and treatment.
- Research how to streamline the information sharing, and understand state and federal requirements for obtaining consent to share information.



Next Steps

- Media Event
- Task Force Continues
- Local Implementation



Comprehensive Report

If you would like to view the *Comprehensive Behavioral Health Task Force Reform Report and Executive Summary* visit:

www.pacounties.org

Members Only – Member Resources



Task Force Members

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- Co-Chair, George Hartwick, Commissioner, Dauphin County
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CCAP Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Members

- Chairman Rod Ruddock, Commissioner, Indiana County
- Basil Huffman, Commissioner and County Veterans Affairs Director, Forest County
- Wayne Nothstein, Commissioner, Carbon County



Acknowledgments

State Level

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County Level

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