

COUNTY HIGHLIGHT:
FRANKLIN

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Franklin County recognizes that serious mental illness (SMI) is overrepresented in corrections systems nationally and at the local level. In 2018, approximately 11 percent of Franklin County inmates were estimated to have a serious mental illness as opposed to 4 percent in the general population.

Teamed Up and Taking On Franklin County's Behavioral Health Needs

Partnership is the key to carrying out Franklin County's behavioral health (BH) strategy. Federal, state, and community entities are part of a collaborative commitment to creating a process, effective for all citizens, which meets the unique needs of our county, keeps pace with change, and connects individuals with mental illness to expanding treatment options.

Franklin County makes a concerted effort to work across intercepts.¹ Led by the Behavioral Health Committee of the Criminal Justice Advisory Board, professionals from behavioral health, law enforcement, court and county administration, jail administration and local organizations gather at bi-monthly meetings to identify and discuss county-wide issues, develop programs, and recommend solutions. As a member of this committee as well as CCAP's Behavioral Health Task Force, Franklin County Commissioner Bob Thomas stays informed of the current behavioral health concerns affecting the state and county while keeping a vision for the future and helping to determine a strategy to get there. "Together, we are determined to address mental health needs and expand resources so that everyone who needs them is met where they are and with the care they require," said Commissioner Thomas.

Franklin County recognizes that serious mental illness (SMI) is overrepresented in corrections systems nationally and at the local level. In 2018, approximately 11 percent of Franklin County inmates were estimated to have a serious mental illness as opposed to 4 percent in the general population. Those without an SMI but having a mental health concern of some type totaled 66.2 percent compared to 18 percent in the general population. Using these statistics as a measure and motivator, the committee examines what can be done at each intercept to ensure individuals with mental health issues are matched with appropriate treatment and avoid the criminal justice system. "Many folks end up in jail because they lack coping mechanisms to deal with stressful situations. Our goal is to keep folks that don't need to be incarcerated out of jail," said Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski.

By teaming up, Franklin County is taking a holistic approach to mental health. Guided by evidenced-based and best practices, along with the unique needs of the area, programs are piloted and implemented with successful results. The following describes a few of our successful programs:

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

With more than 100 trained members, the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is the foundation of Franklin County's BH strategy. Started in 2015, CIT represents state and local law enforcement, first responders, crisis, jail officers/staff, probation/parole officers, hospital staff, mental health professionals and advocates. The team's goal is to provide safer interventions for officers and community members while intentionally approaching incidents with concern for the wellbeing of the citizens involved. Training focuses on effectively de-escalating incidents in the community when encountering individuals who are experiencing behavioral health crises due to mental illness and/or co-occurring

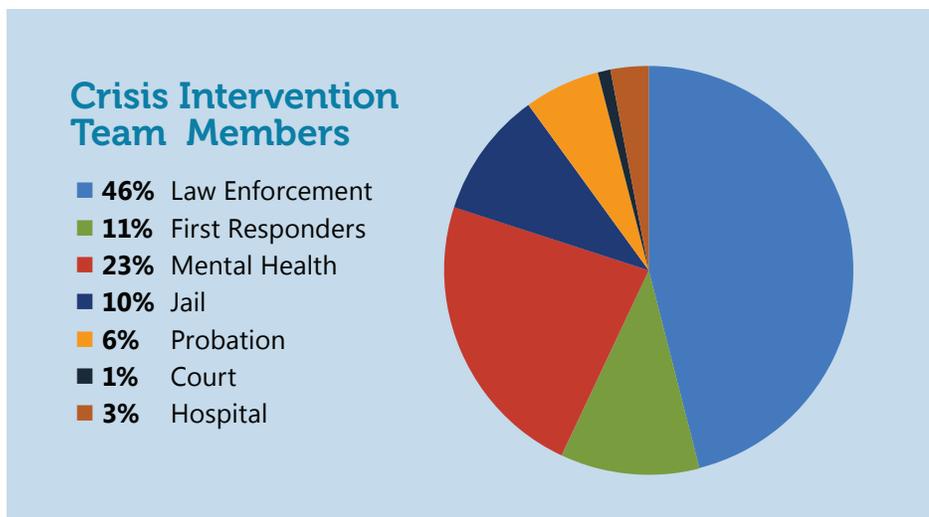


Cori Seilhamer, Franklin County Mental Health Program Specialist and Certified CIT Coordinator and Kay Martin, Keystone Mental Health Community Liaison/Co-responder at the 2017 CIT International Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

substance use disorders. It also provides the information necessary to guide officers in re-directing these individuals into emergency behavioral health facilities.

According to Franklin County Mental Health Program Specialist and Certified CIT Coordinator, Cori Seilhamer, "CIT is more than training—

it brings organizations together and provides tools to enhance supports in our community." Greencastle Police Chief John Phillippy agreed, "This is, without a doubt, the most productive collaboration I've seen in Franklin County. It keeps the members of my community safer as well as the members of my department." Franklin County has joined with Cumberland and Perry counties to provide trainings and would like the opportunity to include more joint trainings with other counties in the future. "We appreciate how local and state police have embraced Franklin County's Crisis Intervention Training. We encourage more counties to incorporate this training as part of their standard practice," said Commissioner Chairman Dave Keller.



CO-RESPONDER PROGRAM

Through a Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency grant awarded in 2017, Franklin County piloted the innovative Mental Health Co-responder Program. Through this program, individuals identified as being in crisis are diverted from the criminal justice system and connected with community based supportive services and natural supports. When police are dispatched to an incident where the behavior does not escalate to the level of police officer custody, the mental health co-responder is called to begin a screening and risk assessment process to determine the needed level of care. In addition to helping reduce criminal justice system involvement for individuals who may be living with a mental illness, intellectual or developmental disability, autism, and or co-occurring disorder, the program has had the added benefit of helping to connect senior citizens with services.

“The biggest benefit of this program is that we meet people where they are and help them identify their needs. We are person-focused and not service-focused,” said Keystone Mental Health Community Liaison/Co-responder, Kay Martin, who recounted a referral for a 92 year old woman who was showing increased confusion and paranoia. “When I got there, she told me that her aide had left and there were clothes in the washing machine. That was the only thing she could focus on—the clothes in the washing machine that will get moldy. So the first thing to do to help—I put the clothes in the dryer! It helped her to be able to focus on something else.”

Developed with a goal of responding to 80 individuals over a two year

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period, the demand for services doubled the two year projection in just seven months. “We knew we needed the program, we just didn’t realize how much,” said Seilhamer—a driving force behind Co-responder program development. Since inception in January 2017, the program has had 397 participants, diverted 48 individuals from jail and shows more than 1,000 interactions. “Local law enforcement embraced this program from the start. It wouldn’t be successful without them,” she said.

Piloted in the southern part of the county, the program has recently expanded to the Borough of Chambersburg through funding from the PA Department of Human Services—Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. As expected, it is seeing success. “The Mental Health Co-Responder Program is reducing the number of individuals involved in the criminal justice system and freeing up police to focus on the safety and security of the community,” said Commissioner Chairman Dave Keller.

Last May, Franklin County’s Co-responder program was recognized for a Justice Public Safety Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) as a model program.

JAIL TO COMMUNITY TREATMENT (VIVITROL²)

In early 2017, the jail implemented the Jail to Community Treatment program to help incarcerated individuals with substance use issues. “The jail staff meets weekly with representatives from Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health, Adult Probation and other departments to review potential participants. This makes our program really successful,” said Warden Bill Bechtold. “The program focuses on counseling and provides offenders the opportunity to connect with community providers prior to their release,” he added. Program participants receive 4-6 weeks of counseling prior to getting their first injection. Treatment and medications are then continued into the community. This sets participants up for success upon their release due to the connections created and trust built with community providers. Franklin County community providers are measuring Franklin County’s success rates at an average of 74 percent, which is 14 percent higher than similar programs. Last year, Department of Corrections’ representatives visited the jail to observe the program with plans to replicate the Franklin County model in other counties.

A recently implemented jail program is TARGET, which stands for Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy. It is a seven-step educational and therapeutic approach for the prevention and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and is funded by Tuscarora Managed Care Alliance reinvestment funds.

Upon entering the community, formerly incarcerated individuals may be eligible for the Case Assisted Re-Entry (CARE) jail diversion program which provides screening, risk assessment, case management and support to individuals who have a mental health disorder who are involved in the criminal justice system. The program links participants to resources to help stabilize the person's mental health condition through psychiatric consult, medication management, therapy, and peer support. CARE program resource linkages include mental health services, substance use services, medication management, peer support, educational/vocational assistance, transportation and housing.

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May 8, 2018—Each May, the Franklin County commissioners proclaim a Franklin County Stepping Up Day of Action to bring awareness to the efforts being made to connect people to treatment and services in lieu of incarceration.

NACo STEPPING UP INITIATIVE

In 2016, Franklin County joined the Stepping Up Initiative led by the National Association of Counties, the American Psychiatric Association Foundation and The Council of State Governments Justice Center. Stepping Up provides counties with a framework and tools for creating a system-wide plan of action to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jail in ways that not only improve public safety but also promote positive outcomes for individuals with mental illness, their families and our community.

Franklin County continues to work collaboratively with law enforcement,

the courts, the jail and human services agencies to reduce the number of people with mental illness in the Franklin County Jail. We are proud to pilot innovative local programs, partner with the state on large scale projects as well as join nationwide initiatives to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable residents. "These programs save tax dollars in many ways. I'm proud that Franklin County is a leader in justice, mental health, and drug and alcohol initiatives," stated Commissioner Bob Thomas. Though we have more work to do, we are committed to creating a system that is dynamic, easily accessible and responsive to the needs of all citizens. 📌

¹ Stages of the criminal justice system as part of a sequential intercept model.

² Vivitrol is an injectable medication used to reduce and suppress cravings for alcohol and/or opiate drugs.