

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: Joint Behavioral Health and Legal and Justice Systems Committees

Meeting Summary for June 14, 2022

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## 1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Raylene King called the meeting to order at 11:32 A.M. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar.

Members Present: Doug Chadwick, Bill Elfo, Brian Estes, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Dan Hammill, Deborah Hawley, Mike Hilley, Raylene King, Jackie Mitchell, Perry Mowery, Mike Parker, Darlene Peterson, Erick Richey, Michael G. Smith, Donnell Tanksley, Courtney Taylor, Bruce Van Glubt, Maia Vanyo

Members Absent: Nathan Bajema, Chris Cochran, Jenn Lockwood, Seth Fleetwood, David Freeman, Brien Thane

## 2. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Clubhouse International model *(from Behavioral Health Committee)* [\(00:02:00\)](#)

Alan Friedlob and Ruth Davidson of the Clubhouse Startup Committee, presented on the Clubhouse model. They showed a video linked in the packet and discussed some key tenants of the model, including:

- The Whatcom clubhouse will not be a drop-in center – clients would need a referral from a medical provider in order to become a member.
- It is not a peer-run program; staff and members work side by side to build skills, form relationships, and find transitional employment for members.
- The Clubhouse contracts with local businesses to fill open positions, which the Clubhouse guarantees to fill. These are usually part-time rolls.
- 40% of Clubhouse members are employed, compared to 15 – 20% of the general population living with serious mental illness.
- The Clubhouse model reduces hospital stays and incarceration while also improving well-being of members.

Members discussed the model, its potential impact on the community, and how it will interact with the IPRTF's goals.

Parker asked how the model handles members who have a co-occurring substance use disorder. Davidson replied that their goal is not to exclude based on diagnosis, however they do not provide treatment for addiction.

Feld asked how the program would be funded, what the leadership would be, and what qualifications the staff would have. Davidson replied that they are in the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) of their own, but for now they are operating under the auspices of NAMI. They currently have a budget of about \$200,000 and have a contract with the Healthcare Authority, though they will also be seeking out outside funding sources such as individual donors. She said that staff would come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Friedlob discussed the possibility of billing Medicaid for services.

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Gockley asked about capacity, criteria for membership, and the impact of homelessness on admittance to the program. Davidson stated that members must be referred by a healthcare provider, though members do not necessarily need to be under active treatment from a provider. She also spoke to capacity and how it may vary day to day and over time.

Elfo brought up the Mental Health Deputy Program and asked if this would be considered a pre-court diversion program. Friedlob said that the relationship between the Clubhouse model and the criminal justice system needed to be explored further, especially in regards to their ability to make referrals.

Richey asked how criminal history and commitment of crime while involved in the program effected membership. Davidson said that history of incarceration is not taken into account for membership and Friedlob added that once you are a member, you are always a member, though an individual's engagement may vary for many reasons.

King asked if schools could refer people to the Clubhouse if they were still receiving assistance from the school via an IEP. She also asked about transportation. Davidson said that it would be likely that the Whatcom Clubhouse would have a transportation program and that she would bring up the idea of referrals from schools.

Parker asked how the Clubhouse might interact with other organizations providing supportive employment. Friedlob said that the intent is not to duplicate services, but to think about what the demand is for those services and if there is an unmet need in the community.

Parker asked about how the Clubhouse furthers racial equity in the communities they are established in. Friedlob said that there is a nationwide effort underway to assess equity within the Clubhouses, which is in its beginning phases. Davidson added that they are currently working on deciding what their board will look like, and she wants to take equity into account.

### **3. Mental Health Sentencing Alternative: [RCW 9.94A.695](#) (from Legal & Justice Systems Committee) ([00:52:10](#))**

Vanyo spoke to the members about the Mental Health Sentencing Alternative (MHSA). This is one of many sentencing alternatives created by the legislature.

- MHSA went into effect in July 2021
- The standard range sentence is suspended and instead treatment or oversight by the DOH is required
- Victim's opinion must be taken into account when deciding if it is appropriate
- Length of time in the MHSA is anywhere from 12 months to three years, depending on their criminal history and offender score
- In order to be eligible, the judge must determine that the offender has serious mental illness at the time of sentencing that results in serious impairment that interferes with life activities. The crime of conviction must be a felony offense, but cannot be a serious violent or sexual offense.

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The judge must also determine that the offender and the community would benefit from the alternative and the offender must be willing to participate.

- In order to make these determinations, the court can look at old records, or order an examination, which has not yet been seen in our courts. The court can also order a pre-sentence investigation, which must include a proposed treatment plan with a provider who has agreed take on the client. Such providers are difficult to find at this time.
  - This could be a useful tool, however we have to have treatment providers available and funding for them.
- 4. Whatcom County Alternative Response Program** *(from Legal & Justice Systems Committee)*  
[\(01:25:49\)](#)

Mowery reported that the Health Department was awarded the contract for the Alternative Response Program. He was unable to share more due to time constraints, however King said that they would put this item on the agenda for a future meeting.

## 5. Other Business

There was no other business.

## 6. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

## 7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 P.M.