

Community Task Force

DRAFT List of Proposed Changes to System-Level Policies, Procedures

To protect the lives of foster children experiencing a mental health crisis

DRAFT

Part 2: Ascension Via Christi/St. Joseph and Sedgwick County District Attorney

March 21, 2022

Robyn Chadwick, Ascension St. Joseph:

Support Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition [recommendations](#) as reported to an enbanc meeting of the Wichita City Council and Sedgwick County Commission on February 16, 2022.

Following are examples from those recommendations that relate to short-term priorities similar to those discussed by the Community Task Force.

- **Workforce:** Develop and implement a collective, innovative, and forceful initiative to address the significant staffing shortages
- Provide funding to hire **two additional licensed counselors** for The Substance Abuse Center of Kansas.
- **Jail Re-entry Specialists:** Hire a civilian case worker who would oversee the re-entry program and perform case management duties as well as enlisting other service providers who would provide services and develop post release plans including case management services, identification acquisition, housing, job training, anger management, AA/NA, parenting training, employment, etc.
- Determine an effective way to expand the **co-responder model** with the Wichita Police Department, Sedgwick County EMS, COMCARE
- Fund **community navigator positions** to help provide personal guidance for those in need. These navigators should be familiar with a variety of service providers in the Wichita/Sedgwick County area and provide guidance for those seeking help by getting them to the best provider as quickly as possible. A pilot effort should be tested and then expanded as evaluated.
- Support a **Social Service Hub/Campus** - Work with local nonprofits, residents, community partners and the business community to develop a master plan that would provide a campus or hub where mental health and substance abuse services – and supportive resources – would be available to those in need.
- **Suggestion from Task Force:** Develop and implement a MOU between St. Joe and WPD to ensure that there is clear understanding of St. Joe's policy when it comes to treating youth who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

In addition, the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition identified the following statewide policy recommendations for the 2022 Legislature.

- To support **the MHSA Coalition legislative agenda for 2022**. These eight policy requests support a critical upstream approach to addressing the needs in this community in the most proactive and cost-effective way.
 - **Workforce**
 - Expand the use of SPARK money to retain behavioral health professionals
 - Develop a loan repayment program for BH professionals
 - Develop a tax credit program for BH professionals
 - Institute in state tuition for students who study behavioral health and practice in Kansas
 - **Medicaid rate**
 - Increase the Medicaid rate for all in-patient and out-patient behavioral health services by 10%
 - **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
 - Fully Fund 988 – Support HB2281
 - **Crisis Stabilization Centers**
 - Fully fund established crisis stabilization centers
 - **Ease wait times for state hospital beds**
 - Long Term
 - Build a regional hospital in the Wichita area to include:
 - 25 Involuntary Beds
 - 10 Competency Beds
 - 15 Restoration Beds
 - Build a Resource Center
 - Short Term
 - Provide solutions to ease the wait times for state hospital beds.
 - Fund state mobile units
 - Provide state staffing that would complete competency evaluations inside of the Sedgwick County jail. (Office space would be provided.)
 - **Expand Medicaid**
 - Approve Medicaid expansion or fund the gap
 - **Telemedicine**
 - Continue telemedicine reimbursement rate at the in-person rate post-Pandemic
 - **Consider recommendations from the State of Kansas Mental Health Taskforce and the Kansas Criminal Justice Reform Commission**

Sedgwick County District Attorney

Marc Bennett, Sedgwick County District Attorney, presented information about the “Stand Your Ground” laws in Kansas, and answered questions about the case.

Following are recommendations he highlighted in a report to the community on January 18, 2022, pages 36 and 37.

Recommendations

- Examine and possibly **change JIAC policy** to
 - Not allow a juvenile in a WRAP be brought into the JIAC facility
 - Not allow a single JIAC worker to handle someone described as “a combative juvenile”
 - Requiring law enforcement officers who bring an allegedly combative, noncompliant youth into the JIAC to stay on scene, or at least nearby, at the JIAC until the juvenile is processed.
- Update the **video recording system** at JIAC to **cover more areas** of the lobby and holding rooms and ensure that the recording system includes **audio** capacity

Recommendations

- Determine if law enforcement officers have received **adequate training** regarding encounters with juveniles, or adults, that present with an apparent mental health break.
 - Should additional training be offered regarding when and under what circumstances a person can and should be taken to Ascension Via Christi St. Joe, as opposed to JIAC, or jail for adults.
 - **Remote/virtual access** to mental health consults in the field under such circumstances?
- Identify a **more efficient mechanism** to obtain help for a juvenile who enters JIAC in a state of mental distress, rather than contacting and waiting for the law enforcement agency that delivered the juvenile to the facility.
- When a foster parent contacts their foster agency to report that a foster child is in mental distress, does the **state system** owe a better response than a directive to call the police and not let the foster child re-enter the home?

Additional recommendations/discussion from the Task Force

- Review opportunities to modify or eliminate the Stand Your Ground Law but be mindful in how those recommendations will impact those who are covered by the law in other circumstances.
- Negligent homicide does not currently exist in Kansas, civil court can be used for that purpose.