

Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)

Information Sharing and Resource Subcommittee

Annual Report 2019

Prepared by: MHRAC Resource Subcommittee, November 2019

Committee Members: Karen Navaaruro, George Mercer, Rob Nelson, Lisa Chavez, Bridget McCoy, Delia Munoz, Gilbert Ramirez, James Burton, Kevin Arthun, Maxwell Kaufman, Laura Johnson, Ellen Braden, Alex Paisano, Lea Harrison, and Matt Dietzel

Information Sharing Subcommittee

The Information Sharing Subcommittee existed in order to help develop protocols that govern the release and exchange of information about individuals with known mental illnesses and to allow needed communication while ensuring confidentiality of those involved.

Information Sharing Subcommittee meetings January to April

- Describing and understanding the Certificate for Evaluation process at APD
- Evaluating the current Certificate for Evaluation form providers use mandate law enforcement to bring individuals to the emergency evaluation
 - Recognition that New Mexico has no standardized document

Resource Subcommittee

The Resource Subcommittee existed in order to help APD identify new mental health resources in the Albuquerque area. It also strove to further enhance coordination with local behavioral health systems.

Resource Subcommittee meetings January to April

Early in the year the Resource Subcommittee worked on several projects.

- Updates to and improved accessibility of the MHRAC webpage
- Discussions of the new Outreach Court
- Resource needs for APD: further strengthening the partnership between APD and Department of Family and Community Services

Subcommittee Merge

In April of this year the Resource and Information Sharing Subcommittees merged after receiving approval from the MHRAC Board. There were several reasons for the consolidation. First, topics discussed in both subcommittees regularly overlapped. There was a sense that each group was completing similar work with expert representatives split between the two committees. Another major reason for the merge was the retirement of Nancy Koenigsberg, who had been chair of the

Information Sharing Subcommittee since its inception with the formation of MHRAC. Ms. Koenigsberg was a champion for vulnerable populations and she has been greatly missed on both the subcommittee and on the MHRAC Board. The last major factor was Ellen Braden stepping down from MHRAC, bringing in Gilbert Ramirez to take her place. Ellen was the chair of the resource subcommittee and did great work organizing and planning topics for the meetings every month but has thankfully remained a member of the new committee. As a result, both subcommittees had lost their chairperson further favoring a merge. After consulting each member of the two committees the second Tuesday of the month was selected for the new meeting day, one week before the full MHRAC gathering. The first combined subcommittee meeting took place in May.

Major Projects of the Combined Subcommittee in 2019

Certificate for Evaluation

The form that is used by providers to order individuals seen in psychiatric emergency rooms was a major focus of the subcommittee. Previous work by the information sharing subcommittee had determined that no standardized form existed state wide. Committee members, headed by Dr. Bridget McCoy, began looking into several questions:

1. Why were these certificates issued for 72 hour timeframes?
2. What should this form actually contain?
3. How would a form produced by this subcommittee become a state wide recognized document?

After looking into the 72 hour life span of a certificate for evaluation, the subcommittee could not find any direction in state law mandating this time frame though, several states including Colorado and Washington mention this window for mental health holds. The subcommittee speculated that lacking a clear timeframe in New Mexico, the decision was eventually made to use this 72 hour timeframe as a best practice at APD, which will inform our future work in this area.

Concurrently, the subcommittee worked on what the form should contain. Several years prior APD and Dr. Rosenbaum worked to create a certificate for evaluation form that would serve as a basis for the form developed by this subcommittee. Our version of the form includes a cover sheet discussing how the certificate will be served and the police department's transportation process. The form also contains important safety information for both the serving officer and the person to be served, in addition to a larger area for a narrative by the issuer.

Lastly, the process of getting a standardized form for the state was examined. Dr. McCoy learned that a justification letter would need to be written to the New Mexico State Supreme Court detailing why the form was needed and expressing MHRAC's support for the document. This letter was provided to the MHRAC Board prior to the October meeting and approved. It will soon be sent to the State Supreme Court for consideration.

APD's Certificate for Evaluation Intake Process

APD's certificate for evaluation Process was identified as an area this subcommittee could help improve. This began with a background look at how APD currently receives and dispatches these types of calls. Next, the City of Albuquerque Legal department was consulted with a possible replacement process. Lieutenant Dietzel developed a process map of how the new procedure could look which was presented to the subcommittee who provided excellent feedback to further strengthen the practice. Currently, work is being done with APD's Emergency Communications Center to become the central location for intake of certificates for evaluation. It is the hope of the subcommittee to include this new process in the 2020 version of APD SOP 2-19 Response to Behavioral Health Issues.

Resource Card Update

Each year APD's resource card is updated. Generally, that update includes minor formatting changes and a call to each resource listed to ensure the provided telephone numbers are correct. This year the card received major changes, headed by a subcommittee of the larger subcommittee including Karen Navarro, Kevin Arthun, Lisa Chavez and Alex Paisano.

The changes include a larger size and a complete redesign of the card itself. In the past the card listed services by provider, this year the revision breaks the services down by category, such as Food Assistance, Case Management or Job Training. The increased size along with this new categorization has made the resource card much easier to read and use. New resources included pick up locations for the Westside Emergency Housing Center and information on a free cell phone program.

Goals in 2020

The subcommittee's future work includes:

- Finishing the APD process for service of certificates for evaluation
- Working on policy revisions for APD SOP 2-19 and 1-37
- Determining chair and co-chair positions for the subcommittee