

Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)

Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2021

Via Zoom

Board Members in Attendance

Co-Chair Danny Whatley	The Rock at Noon Day
Co-Chair Rick Miera	Executive Committee
Betty Whiton	NAMI
Cassandra Bailey	APD CIU
David Ley	New Mexico Solutions
Gilbert Ramirez	CABQ-Dept. of Family & Comm. Services
Laura Nguyen	Albuquerque Ambulance
Matt Dietzel	APD CIU
Maxwell Kauffman	Law Offices of the Public Defender
Nils Rosenbaum, MD., M.P.H.	APD Behavioral Health Division
Paula Burton	Peer Representative
Rob Nelson	APD/C.O.A.S.T

Introduction to MHRAC

Danny

The Mental Health Response Advisory Committee was created by the Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA). We've been around since day one and have a focus on three areas, resources, resources being available to access different things within the city that APD and first responders can use as it impacts homelessness and mental health issues. We are also involved in training and policy; training is one of those things we made a tremendous impact on. As far as the training that is offered. Policies are one of those things where the MHRAC is involved with assisting in writing and approving and recommending policy as it relates again to the narrow focus; we think narrow, but sometimes it gets pretty wide focused on how law enforcement interacts with those experiencing homelessness and those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Welcome first-time guests

Jadah Salinas

Property Manager at Deacon Property Services, Albuquerque, NM, a property management company. Property managers are seeing a significant increase in those who are afflicted by mental health issues on properties. I'm trying to figure out a way to make a new industry standard so that all property managers have at least the mental health, first aid training so that we know how to see address those who are suffering.

Approval of meeting minutes

1st Motion – Rick Miera

2nd Motion – David Ley

All were in favor of minutes as written upon the correction stated above.

Public Comment (Two minutes per person, 15 minutes total)

Charlie Verploegh

I am the Assistant Director of the Department of Behavioral Health Services. I want to talk briefly about our Community Engagement Teams (CET) which is a pure option for engaging people in the community pre and post-crisis and about what peer support is.

By developing peer-based programs we can provide an alternative option for individuals who are instead accessing those high acuity high-cost services. Peer Support is an individual being able to engage with someone else who's had a behavioral health crisis in their own life and they progressed to a point of personal recovery that they can provide a message of hope to others. Peer Programming has been shown to work in a variety of different circumstances in a lot of ways because it provides an opportunity to build trust based on a principle of shared experience. Community Engagement Teams is a program that's going to be implemented by the Youth Development Incorporated Organization (YDI); they're going to be providing services to individuals pre and post-crisis for behavioral health needs. It's a peer-to-peer support program that is really focused on developing natural supports, coping skills, self-management skills. It's going to be accepting referrals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The focus is really on assisting and stabilizing that client before the client's cry escalates into a crisis. The staffing includes a clinical supervisor, an intake manager, a data manager, and three peer support workers, and a Ph.D. level prescriber. Once that referral gets made to CET, that peer support worker will be assigned to that individual, they'll be able to engage that individual, and for their family out into the community in order to provide that assistance with stabilization and connection to services.

Gilbert

Q. Can something be sent out to the group in regards to that referral source for community providers, and how to access it?

Charlie Verploegh

A. I will drop my number and the email into the chat, but I can send a PowerPoint PDF and the press release.

Lt. Dietzel

I've seen Community Engagement Teams (CET) as a secondary referral source for a referral that is low-level; so you can go to CET with low-level referrals rather than COAST. We're going to overload CET, so please send those referrals over to them.

Danny

Q. I read the article, how many teams do you have, and when will they actually be deployed?

Charlie

A. It's been open since April 15th; they have three peers and those peers are engaged together to go out to community response in people's communities, in their homes, or the office. The line is open so you can start referring.

Danny

Q. This is a non-law enforcement group, right?

Charlie

A. Yes

Mary Chavez, COAST

Q. Will, you be working with individuals that are on the autism spectrum?

Charlie

A. Yes, I think you could refer them and they'll be assessed by the peer and the clinical supervisor and then if it's not the best fit for that service, they can always help that individual get connected to other services within the community.

Danny

Charlie, we may give you a slot in the agenda so you can give us a more detailed presentation; you have a ton of information.

Charlie

We are going to be presenting to the 988 Sub-committee for the state on Friday.

Lisa Jackson

At a high level, we are with InVive Solutions and we've been contracted with the BHD and the Department of Health, to develop a pilot project called an Overdose Fatality Review Panel. We will be looking at a very small population, but we'll be looking at those individuals who have experienced an overdose fatality following incarceration; so after they've been discharged back into the community. At this point, the panel is full and we're getting ready to take off, but we're certainly grateful for this opportunity and we think it'll create some interesting opportunities for the State of New Mexico around how do we assess and deal with gaps in systems of care. So the model of Overdose Fatality Review is one that we hope will become sustainable and statewide.

Laura Nguyen

I am the social worker at Albuquerque Ambulance Services

I am sensing a couple of things going on in the first responder field. The first of which is exhaustion, stress-related exhaustion, post all these months of COVID and dealing and responding and being essential. I think levels are returning to normal and folks are feeling the stress and I think coincidentally with that, I'm seeing movement in a positive direction in the realm of addressing the emotional and mental health needs of First Responders. So the reason I bring this up is that I truly believe that the better we address the emotional mental health needs of first responders, the better equipped they are to address the mental and emotional health needs of everyone they interact with. So I'm just saying this to encourage anyone on this call, who is in the capacity to help contribute to that effort or to contribute to addressing the needs of our first responders to please help.

Dr. Rosenbaum

We are trying to expand and hire new people and keep our relationship with New Mexico Solutions. We're combining Peer Support, Chaplain Unit, and City Wellness, all together into a Wellness Unit. We will all have our separate parts but there will also be that combination. Any support this group can give to that will be greatly appreciated; we need more civilians, sworn personal, and therapists, to make it work correctly because part of it will consist of doing annual check-ins with all of the police.

We teamed up with UNM and Dr. Croissant; we're going to be researching that. It is what the feds have been asking for, research of annual check-ins, but I think we'll be the first ones to actually do any real research.

Albuquerque Community Safety Department Update, Mariela Ruiz-Angel

Mariela Ruiz-Angel

I'm the director for Albuquerque Community Safety Department, which is an alternative response to 911 calls, 311 calls 242-cops and any other major emergency calls that have an underlying behavioral mental health issue that does require police presence. We started this in June of 2020 and have been on this journey since then. Our budget was approved and will be about 7.3 million dollars. We are working on SOP's, training plans, and discretionary funding. We would like to have the MHRAC Training Sub-Committee's eyes on this.

We bought our vehicles, and our radios that are going to be on the same wavelength with APD, AFR, and the State, so long-term if we need to start taking calls or get dispatched from other areas, we can do that and be on the same radio wavelength. We're hiring people who meet ACS values.

Danny

We're hearing from the Court and the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the parties, that the MHRAC will continue to be involved with those areas that involve homelessness and mental health crisis; that was the city's response to that because the civil suit was not directed necessarily only at APD but directed at the city. It's the Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA) but it involves the city so clarification that we received is that the MHRAC will be involved in it.

The planning committee has one new member, but it's covered by three folks, myself, Rick Miera, and David Ley, so one of us will be in attendance in that planning committee.

Mariela

The planning committee that we have been very purposeful with just stakeholders who have lived experiences have been working with ACS. Once we have some more capacity with the staff we would eventually make that a public meeting that folks are welcome to join or that we will record.

I would like to mention that we've brought on two deputies our first is Deputy Jasmine Desario, she's going to be our Deputy of Administration and Policy. She has an amazing background working in operation and helped with a lot of the operation for the vaccines and COVID tests. We also brought D. Albert Hall, who is our Deputy of Field Operations; he will be starting on Monday. I'm going to have him potentially be a part of this group because he'll be in charge of our field responders.

New Gateway Centers Update, Quinn Donnay, Family, and Community Services

Lisa Huval

I am the Deputy Director of Housing and Homelessness for the Department of Family and Community Services. We are hiring a Coordinator for our Gateway project.

As many of you know, the city acquired the Gibson Medical Center on April 1st. This is a fifty thousand square foot building in the International District that has served as a hospital and health hub for the community. Our vision is that the Gibson Medical Center will continue to serve as a health hub for the community and the Gateway Center will be one of the core components at Gibson Medical Center. By Gateway Center, I mean Emergency Shelter that helps with core services that will transition folks into permanent housing and connect them to other resources that they need.

We have really been focused on Outreach to the neighborhoods. We've met with two of the neighborhood associations that are closest to Gibson Medical Center for their input. You can send questions about Gateway at Gibson Medical Center or just make comments at GatewayInput@cabq.gov

We'll be meeting with core service providers and stakeholders in the community including the MHRAC for input into the development of the operational plan. We have invited MHRAC to participate in the Homeless Services System Committee that meets under the umbrella of the Homeless Coordinating Council.

Danny

I would really like that committee member to be a provider that is involved in day-to-day encounters with the specific population.

Lisa Huval

There are 10 tenants in the building right now, six of whom provide medical or Behavioral Health Services. It's about a quarter to a third of the current space leased by those existing tenants. One portion of the medical center will be the Gateway Center, which will provide emergency shelter. We're also planning for medical respite. We're looking for folks who are interested in leasing space at the Gibson, Medical Center; our vision is to make that space a health hub with primary care providers or Behavioral Health Providers.

KC Quirk

Q. Councilor Pat Davis, made a statement about trying to limit shelters to 30 beds; I'm just wondering if there's an intersection malady of the Gateway Center?

Lisa Huval

A. You're right, Counselor Davis did introduce a resolution that would basically make a change to limit the number of shelter beds, but he's planning to reintroduce it differently.

APD Encampment Policy continued, Lisa Huval, Family and Community Services

Lisa Huval

We are at that point where we are sifting through and analyzing all of that feedback and figuring out how to incorporate it into our policies.

One of the high impact strategies that came out of the Facilities Committee of the Homeless Coordinating Council is a strategy that the city and the county are looking at the Department of Family and Community Services for some preliminary research to see what would be involved with partnering with a faith-based organization to established Sanctioned Encampment under the zoning code. Counselor Gibson did include 500,000 in the Capital Improvement Plan for Sanctioned Encampments; that will go to voters in the fall.

Independent Monitor's Thirteenth Report (Doc. 781) discussion, Danny Whatley

Danny

IMR-13 is from Dr. Ginger and his team. The MHRAC concentrates on our sections, and we did well, the one area that we are not in compliance in continues to be the MOU with UNM. One that I think we can make a difference with is the rewriting and addressing of our bylaws.

MHRAC Bylaws discussion, Danny Whatley

Danny

I would like to put together a team of at least two or three people to review the bylaws and I would like to invite Max Kauffman to be a part of that team.

Maxwell Kauffman

I would be happy to.

Danny

One of the things we would like to address is the membership roll, for those who are non-attending and replace them and replace them with individuals that have an interest. IMR-13 is available on the city's website.

Hospital Meeting update, Lieutenant J. Gonzales, APD

Lt. Gonzales

We had another meeting three weeks ago with Presbyterian hospital which included some doctors, nurses, AFR, Security, and CIU. We have a commitment to have ongoing discussions in the way of quarterly meetings. We have policy differences in the way we drop-off/hand-off and the way they accept, but we seem to all be on the same page in trying to improve that. The issue seems to be miscommunication.

Dr. Nancy Martin

I am an Emergency Psychiatrist with Presbyterian Hospital. I am a consultant that bridges the gap between law enforcement and our emergency room. All of the stakeholders at that meeting worked really well together, and I'm also hopeful that with ongoing communication we will be able to smooth out some misunderstandings. I think that we were able to understand each other a little bit differently and definitely set up a process that if there are ongoing cases that are difficult. We can have a forum to discuss the issue.

Wendy Linebrink

Q. Is there a Crisis Triage Center in Albuquerque?

Lt. Dietzel

A. There will be an active Crisis Stabilization Center in Albuquerque that is going to run through the County and UNM. We can't transport to it as law enforcement; so our top three options right now are UMH, Presbyterian (Kaseman), and Lovelace.

Dr. Nancy Martin

I would like to be more involved in the planning of the Crisis Triage Center.

Gilbert

If I might add, there has been a lot of thought and a lot of wonderful partners at the table. I think we need to move forward. Also, there is some push for funding both statewide and city government.

Judah

My idea is there needs to be a training program kind of like crime-free multi-housing; a training program for property managers to be able to get certified to see these things and point them out and give people the resources to get them in the right direction.

KC Quirk

There is not a certification in this area for property managers but I certainly think your idea, your concept of being a group of people who could be trained on how to respond effectively, humanly, and appropriately to people with behavioral health issues.

Social Dispatch update, Deputy Chief E. Jaramillo, AFRS

DC Emily Jaramillo

Social Dispatch, we're trying to pilot an app for the swing and graveyard shifts with APD because there is not a lot of services for people after 5 pm; we get calls through 311 and 911 regarding encampments. If APD does not see any criminal activity they can put it into this app and the next day we could send services out. We've been piloting it with the Valley Area Command on the swing and grave and then Jason Downings security team has also been assisting us with that and we've been getting the data collected so the officers have been doing a good job with that. We are at that point where we have the data and the officers are using it. I proposed in a meeting with Commander Brown that we need service providers to send out but we didn't get a big response.

Wendy Linebrink

Q. I'm wondering if the new Community Engagement Team would be the right resource to be sent out to support those follow-up calls if you want them in person. If you want just a phone call to follow up then the New Mexico Crisis and Access Line can help with that?

DC Jaramillo

The hope with Social Dispatch is to have a firefighter or police officer not wake somebody up so we could send out actual service providers the next day. When calls came in for people sleeping or camping in the middle of the night where there are no medical needs, there are no needs for law enforcement to really interact so they felt like they were just waking up people to just place them in the middle of the night.

Report and Update from CIU, APD, and BSS

Lt. Dietzel

CIU held a 40-Hour CIT in April, it went very well and we had no COVID outbreaks.

Detective Donna Richter who is a legend, and has done a great job her entire career will be retiring soon and Sgt. Mark Landavazo will be promoting to Lieutenant and leaving the CIU as well.

Lt. Gonzales

The CIU now has a crisis/therapy dog name Oakley; she is a Labradoodle. Sgt. Landavazo has been working hard at getting that taken care of and she was picked up today. Hopefully, Oakley will be making people feel more comfortable as she starts being taken out to calls.

Report and Update from C.O.A.S.T

COAST remains with just two, Lisa and me. We are handling things really well. As of June 31st we are losing a major benefactor. Hoping to get new benefactors to help with eviction notices, hotel vouchers, etc.

Lt. Gonzales

The Entity that Rob Nelson is talking about is Pay It Forward, Sharon Pedroncelli, she helped the CIU substantially over the years so we are sad to see her go.

Report and Update from Sub-Committees

Lt. Dietzel

We had an MHRAC Information and Resources Sharing meeting last week and we discussed the Special Order (SO) that was sent out to the MHRAC Board Members last week, the Community Engagement Teams, and briefly about the Safe Harbor Bill that Counselor Davis was talking about for a while.

David Ley

We have our MHRAC Training Subcommittee meeting next Monday; we have been doing some review of some updated curriculum and training memos in the interim.

Paula

Come to our committee meetings to find out what interesting things we will be talking about.

MHRAC Final Discussion

Danny

Just a reminder, the IMR-13, Judge Browning, is setting a date and the MHRAC will be a part of that. One of the major discussions is the MHRAC role and how that is going as far as the new entities and working with non-law enforcement as they interact with those experiencing homeless situations and mental health crisis, among programs, and different things. It was a little slow starting but it seems to be picking up some momentum and so the Judge certainly is going to want to know what's going on.

We have an AMICI meeting this week and will be discussing some of that same information, but whatever comes out of the zoom meeting with Judge Browning we'll certainly let the MHRAC know at our next meeting.

Gilbert

The City and the DOH are partnering again to do QPR Gatekeeper Training for suicide reduction in the community; the free resource link will be in the chat and will take you to the site and workbook session through December. We encourage people to sign up, it'll be on a virtual platform but another resource for our community members,

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 15, 2021