



HEALTH SERVICES

2577 NE Courtney Drive, Bend, Oregon 97701
Public Health (541) 322-7400, FAX (541) 322-7465
Behavioral Health (541) 322-7500, FAX (541) 322-7565
www.deschutes.org

April 15, 2021

Co-Chairs and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

Deschutes County was the fortunate recipient of the Improving People's Access to Community-Based Treatment, Supports, and Services (IMPACTS) grant which supported our efforts to create a 24/7 Crisis Stabilization Center. The IMPACTS Grant Program was developed to reduce recidivism and improve health outcomes for a small but significant group of people who repeatedly cycle through Oregon's county jails and emergency rooms. I am writing today to request continued funding for this program as we've seen tremendous progress in diverting people with a serious mental illness from both the emergency department as well as the criminal justice system.

The Deschutes County Stabilization Center is a collaborative project between the Sheriff's Office and Behavioral Health. We serve individuals of any age, regardless of ability to pay, who are experiencing a mental health crisis. We also serve individuals who are voluntarily brought in by law enforcement in an effort to divert them from jail and the emergency department. We are adjacent to the public safety campus and work closely with the jail to support individuals who are incarcerated and who struggle with mental illness. The Crisis Stabilization Center opened in June of 2020 and is averaging 218 visits per month. Twenty percent of people served are brought in by law enforcement, who spend an average of 4.7 minutes at the facility when dropping someone off, saving valued time and increasing public safety. Twenty percent of the people served report they would have gone to the emergency department had we not been here. Another 32% report they don't know what they would have done if we hadn't been here and 2% of people report they would have ended their life. We've seen an 8% reduction in emergency department utilization by law enforcement and are averaging approximately 25 emergency department diversions per month with an estimated cost savings to the healthcare system of \$359,400 – \$679,200 annually.

One example of a success story is an individual we'll call Joe. Joe is an elderly individual that accumulated an extraordinary number of jail stays (for petty crimes) and emergency room visits after his spouse died. This seemed to be caused by a combination of substance abuse, cognitive decline, depression, disregard for societal norms, and a host of medical issues. It was notable that even with assistance, Joe was unable to manage basic personal hygiene and was frequently urinating and defecating on himself throughout the course of the day.

Joe was booked into jail 30 times and spent a total of 676 days incarcerated. He had 118 visits to the emergency department, which included visits both locally and across the State. Through a

Our Mission: To Promote and Protect the Health and Safety of Our Community.



HEALTH SERVICES

2577 NE Courtney Drive, Bend, Oregon 97701
Public Health (541) 322-7400, FAX (541) 322-7465
Behavioral Health (541) 322-7500, FAX (541) 322-7565
www.deschutes.org

portion of this time Joe's brother was his guardian but no placement was willing to accept him due to his extreme behaviors. Joe felt comfortable coming to the Crisis Stabilization Center and connected with Peer Supports and a Case Manager. We were finally able to get the individual hospitalized, confirmed a neurocognitive disorder diagnosis, and convened a group of hospital Social Workers, Deschutes County Stabilization Center staff, jail staff, adult protective services and finally succeeded in finding a placement that would accept him. All of this lead to a successful placement in a memory care unit where he remains today and is doing extremely well.

Often times what happens in cases like these is they get pawned off on to other systems and they fall through the cracks, which is how they end up in the target population. The IMPACTS grant program and the dollars associated have given us the resources necessary to intensely wrap around these individuals and the ability to put in the time and effort to really improve their lives. As you see though, the amount of time and staff it takes is extensive but well worth it. We hope IMPACTS funding will continue and that funding for programs that already exist and are showing good outcomes will not be cut in order to provide funding for new programs.

Thanks!

Holly Harris, M.Ed., LPC
Program Manager
Deschutes County Health Services