



Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>

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## Community Outreach 7 town 5 year agreement

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Deanna Ryerson <DRyerson@howardcenter.org>  
To: Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>  
Cc: Brandi Littlefield <BrandiL@howardcenter.org>

Mon, Sep 27, 2021 at 12:08 PM

Josh,

In following up from our last conversation, here's what I would share with your board:

Concerns relayed in the last meeting were actually in reference to our crisis team, First Call for Chittenden County. This is a separate program in Howard Center, operates 24/7, and has a different purpose than Community Outreach, focusing on more acute psychiatric crises. Unfortunately, just of late has had tremendous staffing and coverage issues and we have had significant (and abnormal) delays in requests for services. We are working on this and encourage anyone who has concerns to reach out.

Community Outreach is not meant to be a psychiatric "emergency" response, though it is a part of Howard Center's crisis continuum of care, and we hope responses are timely and aim to provide as seamlessly to the event as possible. Many outreach contacts are just that – outreach to proactively develop relationships with individuals who later may need a crisis response. We hope that more of their time is spent in making connections, referring to services and that crisis response and de-escalation activities are fewer and able to be accommodated through the First Call team. We have realized that there are, at times, confusion in which team does what and realize perhaps more marketing to the public might be beneficial (i.e., when to call 911, when to call FCCC, and when to call Community Outreach), and hopefully, when someone dials a different service, we work together to help them sort out what makes sense as expeditiously as possible.

One very real consideration for metrics and Community Outreach is that this program is NOT 24/7, so some work is done in follow up the next business day from the night before or weekend hours, so "response time" has a different context and meaning. Contracts to date have been signed with the concept that the Towns are purchasing capacity/access to the team in the operational hours outlined (8:30am-8pm M-F) and budget is aligned to meet that need. We are certainly open to exploring outcomes and performance measures more fully as a Steering Committee, but will need to do so with agreement across all collaborative partners, as the contracts are identical and this is how we've set up governance.

We are happy to put outcomes and marketing on the next Steering Committee agenda for discussion and determine how to move forward, but hoping since the contract period is already under way by 3 months that we can commit to resolve this across the group and perhaps sign now, with option to add addendum if this is desired for all parties.

Is this acceptable?

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