

In 2019, a framework was designed for the Yellowstone County Behavioral Health Crisis Continuum by local crisis stakeholders. Substance Abuse Connect brought together this group to transform Yellowstone County Crisis Services in alignment with National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care, Crisis Now model, and State of Montana Behavioral Health Crisis System Strategic Plan.

The SAC crisis framework identifies three priorities and the goals and systems to affect the priorities:

Priority 1: End unnecessary ER/Hospitalizations and Jail Bookings

**Goal #1 – QUICK HANDOFF.** Decrease law enforcement time spent on mental health and SUD services and return officers and deputies to public safety duties

**Goal #2 – LOWER COST STABILIZATION.** Decrease the number of unnecessary jail bookings and ER/hospitalizations by stabilizing individuals in lower cost crisis receiving facilities.

*System Components:* Crisis Now – Crisis Line (988), Mobile Crisis Response, Crisis Receiving and Stabilization.

Priority 2: Stop the Revolving Door

**Goal #1 – JAIL TREATMENT.** Increase the # of individuals in jail who receive mental health and SUD services while incarcerated, and prepare successful transition out of jail.

*System Components:* Jail MH/SUD Services, Connection to Step Down Support

**Goal #2 – SUCCESSFUL STEP DOWN.** Decrease the # of individuals who re-enter crisis services, jail, or ER/Hospital by providing recovery supports in stepdown facilities and programs.

*System Components:* Transition Support, Education/Employment, Life Skills, Pro-social Leisure, Recovery Support, Shelter Housing

**Goal #3 – PREVENTION.** Increase the # of children Prenatal-Grade 12 who have access to mental health and SUD interventions prior to any engagement with law enforcement.

*System Components:* Perinatal intervention programs, Early identification in schools, pro-social youth activities, positive adult interactions.

## Yellowstone County Mental Health Mill Levy Efforts to Support the Framework

Yellowstone County has multiple active efforts that facilitate the State of Montana goals for a local Crisis Now model to ensure appropriate services to anyone, anywhere, anytime. The investments in FY23 have allowed for the development and maintenance of system components of Priority 1 of the SAC Yellowstone County Framework. The Crisis Now model has four key elements for a successful crisis system:

1. High-tech crisis call centers – Currently residents of the region have access to an active 988 crisis line that is managed by Voices of Hope in Great Falls, MT. It is currently connected to the Yellowstone County resources through the 211 website and phone resource. Call to 988/211 are both taken at Voices of Hope for a robust singular data collection location for types of services being sought in our community.
2. 24/7 Mobile Crisis Response – July 1, 2023 established Medicaid rules for the state of Montana will go into effect for Mobile Crisis. The City of Billings, Billings Fire Department and Rimrock Foundation have a pilot of the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) Team coming online in mid-August with funding from the City of Billings and the Crisis Diversion Grant. Anticipated need once systems are up and running are 3-4 additional CRU teams.
3. Crisis Stabilization Programs – The Community Crisis Center is a 23-hour 59-minute crisis receiving facility licensed through the State of Montana. Currently it is the only such facility in the state of Montana with 2-3 more coming online in the next 18-24 months around the state.
4. Embedded essential principles and practices: Recovery orientation, trauma-informed care, significant use of peer support specialists, commitment to Zero Suicide/Suicide Safer Care, strong commitments to safety for consumers and staff, and collaboration with law enforcement.

In the past year, \$1.3 million in tax payer dollars of the Yellowstone County Mental Health Mill Levy have been used to support Substance Abuse Connect coalition and the Continuum of Care coalition efforts resulting in:

1. Over 2400 unique individuals served through our crisis system and diverted from higher cost and inappropriate levels of care including emergency rooms, incarceration and Montana State Hospital.
2. Coordinated data collection and analysis across multiple crisis organizations in both the behavioral health and housing crisis systems
3. Local resource support of coalition efforts has allowed the coalitions to attract additional state, federal and private resources to treatment, diversion and prevention efforts across Yellowstone County.
4. Invested in system synergies to allow for more effective use of resources in addressing populations in crisis in Yellowstone County.

## Continued Strategic Support Recommendations for Mill Levy Resources

**Goal #1:** Provide behavioral health intervention for the population most likely to disrupt public safety and is at high risk for recidivism. Facilitate effective hand-offs from law enforcement to behavioral health crisis support and from behavioral health crisis support to supportive services.

Strategy #1: Support local 988/211 resource information maintenance for local community and regional 988 call line. Ongoing local updates and management of 211, United Way: \$30,000

Strategy #2: For one year, provide operational resources to the Community Crisis Center as they redevelop a more robust Medicaid billing program, a complete review of operational systems related to populations needs and the Crisis Now model, CIT training with law enforcement, and most efficient service provider staffing model. Community Crisis Center: \$1,200,000

Strategy #3: Ongoing support of the Coordinated Entry System Coordinator that supports approximately 30 intake specialists and a Community Navigator with the Billings Police Department. Continuum of Care/Downtown Billings Association: \$156,000

**Goal #2:** Track the outcomes quarterly and report de-identified data to the Board of County Commissioners

Strategy #1: Continue data collection with JG Research with identified goals for expanding a coordinated data set for Yellowstone County usable across the sector. Continue collecting and monitoring data from the Community Crisis Center for system coordination. Data collection and analysis: \$14,000

**Goal #3:** Identify Habitual Users of social/clinical service and a plan to significantly reduce the number of their "re-entries" into crisis programs and/or the criminal justice system.

Strategy #1: CONNECT will begin a work group to identify Frequent Utilizers of services in Yellowstone County. Local agencies have identified multiple data collection systems as well as local reporting on Frequent Utilizers. Work group will identify how Frequent Utilizers are defined (distinguishing between crisis, problem and emergency). In addition, where and how information can be collected and shared across the system effectively and according to privacy laws, including but not limited to HIPAA.

Strategy #2: CONNECT will bring together law enforcement, criminal justice, behavioral health, hospitals, prevention specialists and the housing coalition to update the Sequential Intercept Map for Yellowstone County.