



Dover's Mental Health Crisis Services in 2022: A Study by a Subcommittee of the Dover Mental Health Alliance Task Force

November 30, 2022

Outline

- ▶ **The Challenge**
- ▶ **DMHA Task Force Subcommittee Composition**
- ▶ **Our Charge**
- ▶ **Our Process**
- ▶ **Barriers/Areas of Opportunity**
- ▶ **Six Strategic Objectives**
- ▶ **Sample Recommendations**
- ▶ **Our Vision for the Strategic Plan**

The Challenge

Like other cities, Dover has experienced a dramatic rise in demand for mental health crisis services. Possible causes include:

- ▶ the pandemic's impact on mental health
- ▶ greater awareness of available mental health resources
- ▶ decreased stigmatization surrounding mental health care

Dover already has an impressive track record of addressing the mental health needs of its population.

In an effort to remain responsive to the growing mental health needs of the community, Dover City leadership and the Dover Mental Health Alliance Task Force established a Subcommittee to study the challenge and make appropriate recommendations.

Who We Are: Subcommittee Composition

- ▶ **Chair, Max Latona (Executive Director at the Center for Ethics in Society)**
- ▶ **Christine Boston (Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Dover School District)**
- ▶ **William Breault (Chief of Dover Police)**
- ▶ **Stephen Curtis (Director of Behavioral Health at Portsmouth Regional Hospital)**
- ▶ **Malachi Fisher (Director of Emergency Management and EMS at Portsmouth Regional)**
- ▶ **Keith Irwin (Division Chief of Emergency Medical Services at City of Dover Fire & Rescue)**
- ▶ **Laura Knoy (Program Moderator for the Center for Ethics in Society)**
- ▶ **Chris Kozak (Executive Director of Community Partners)**
- ▶ **Michael McShane (Dover Fire Chief)**
- ▶ **Alex Mitrushi (Dover Police)**
- ▶ **Kellie Mueller (Assistant Vice President at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital)**
- ▶ **Dave Terlemezian (Dover Police)**
- ▶ **Suzanne Weete (Community Engagement and Education, Community Partners/DMHA).**

Our Charge

Develop a set of recommendations that reflect trends, obstacles, opportunities and best practices to follow as they relate to ongoing City response to mental health related calls for service and needs.

Our Process

- ▶ **Data Collection**
- ▶ **Research of local, regional, and national trends**
- ▶ **Consultation with community members**
- ▶ **Community Outreach**
- ▶ **Interviews with City department leadership**

Five Barriers/Areas of Opportunity:

- ▶ **Social Stigma and Prejudice**
- ▶ **Tracking and Data**
- ▶ **Communication and Coordination**
- ▶ **Staffing and Support**
- ▶ **Dedicated Facility**

Six Strategic Objectives:

- ▶ **Strategic Objective I—Education**
- ▶ **Strategic Objective II—Training**
- ▶ **Strategic Objective III—Communication**
- ▶ **Strategic Objective IV—Evaluation**
- ▶ **Strategic Objective V—Staffing**
- ▶ **Strategic Objective VI—Facility**

14 Sample Recommendations:

1. **City Attorney:** Offer hiring supervisors a training program on employment law concerning mental health.
2. **Community Services:** Participate in City staff training for Mental Health First Aid.
3. **Executive (includes Office of Business Development):** Work with any interested private/social service entity to study feasibility and impact of 24/7 Mental Health facility.
- ▶ **Finance:** Post list of service partners to be contacted when a mental health crisis arises.
1. **Fire and Rescue:** Develop reciprocal waivers with other community service providers to coordinate care and follow-up.

14 Sample Recommendations:

6. **Human Resources:** Spearhead a culture change of mental health awareness among city staff by creating a team of department health and wellness coordinators who will coordinate educational programs and materials within each department, including mental wellness for department employees.
7. **Information Technology:** Facilitate mental health training programs for City departments and staff by providing needed IT expertise, equipment, and support.
8. **Library:** Partner with the Dover Mental Health Alliance to establish a regular schedule of in-person, virtual, and/or hybrid community conversations and programs addressing mental health, substance misuse and homelessness.
9. **Media Services:** Enhance public education about mental health and mental health support through the City of Dover's social media, website, and public television.
10. **Planning:** Install suicide prevention and mental health resource signs at appropriate locations.

14 Sample Recommendations continued:

- 11. **Police Department:** Staff a civilian Community Outreach Specialist position to assist the Social Worker.
- 12. **Recreation:** Consider hosting mental health educational programs for seniors and other age appropriate groups.
- 13. **Schools:** Support the maintenance of existing school-based mental health positions in order to reduce high staff-student ratios that may result in reduced student access to academic, social-behavioral, and mental health services.
- 14. **Welfare:** Strengthen lines of communication with service agencies to recommend support for those in need, and when client has self-disclosed mental health condition and care.

Our Vision for the Plan:

The Subcommittee defers to Dover leadership to decide whether and how to implement the Strategic Plan, but we envision that it serve in the following way:

- Roadmap
- Department Centered and Community Owned
- Annual Progress Report
- The Dover Example