

Opportunities and Strategies

Opportunity For Change #1: Expand and enhance mental health and substance use crisis response from police to a multi-disciplinary approach.

Strategy I: Grow the current Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) co-responder model (a mental health clinician deployed in the same vehicle with law enforcement in operation since 2019) to offer a _____ approach through other law enforcement teams (e.g., El Paso County Sheriff, City of Socorro Police, El Paso Independent School District Police, and others).

Strategy II: Explore evidence-based enhancements for optimal mental health and substance use crisis response. Model approaches include CIT team use of electronic tablets (CORE Model) for Mental Health provider virtual access on site.

Strategy III: Create and integrate a medical stability protocol with El Paso Fire Department/Emergency Medical Services and El Paso Police Department coordinating a three-prong approach where possible and appropriate.

Value proposition: The current model for mental health and substance use crisis intervention is not available 24/7 in all areas of El Paso County. By utilizing other law enforcement officials in coordination with Emergence Health Network, El Paso can refine and replicate a model response. In addition, taking the CIT team to new heights by creating a true multi-disciplinary response inclusive of exploring use of tablets (CORE Model) for Mental Health provider virtual access on site and coordinating a three-prong approach (Police, EMS, Mental Health Professionals).

Opportunity For Change #2: Expand and Enhance crisis dispatch services including integration and coordination of 9-1-1 and 9-8-8 dispatch teams.

Strategy I: Create a long-term central location to house City and County 9-1-1, 3-1-1, and 9-8-8 dispatch services.

Strategy II: Implement model algorithms (procedures and practices) for appropriate triage of calls to the call center and appropriate dispatch of services suited to the individual's needs.

Strategy III: Monitor 9-1-1, 3-1-1 and 9-8-8 dispatch data including crisis line calls, crisis diversions, response outcomes, and others to assist in evaluating and documenting progress.

Strategy IV: Explore policy change to maximize timely information sharing for all providers – including mental health and substance use service providers (e.g., convert to opt out rather than opt in for consent). Both federal and state law permit this practice change.

Strategy V: Explore dispatch service collaboration with the Paso del Norte Health Information exchange to increase accuracy and precision of crisis triage and response.

Value Proposition: Maximizing use of technological advances to ensure timely, confidential information exchange with appropriate levels of access for accurate and precise decisions at crisis triage, response, stabilization, and discharge will contribute to improved health outcomes and greater opportunity for lasting recovery from mental illness or substance use conditions.

Opportunity For Change #3: Create crisis respite options to address gaps for conditions such as competency restoration.

Strategy I: Design and build a facility within the reserved space at the County jail annex with capacity for expanded outpatient, short term observation, and transitional living service options.

Strategy II: Increase community partner collaboration to provide timely and appropriate support services for individuals receiving care at the new jail annex facility.

Value Proposition: Creating transitional support options outside of incarceration and inpatient psychiatric care contributes to improved opportunities for lasting recovery and decreased need for justice system interaction to address mental health and substance use conditions.

Opportunity For Change #4: Increase availability of full-service extended observation units that include medical clearance.

Strategy I: Collaborate with Emergence Health Network to expand and enhance current service options available in the 1600 Montana extended observation unit.

Strategy II: Explore collaborative partner options to scale full service extended observation units within the El Paso County area.

Value Proposition: Easily accessible full service extended observation units increase opportunity for timely and appropriate crisis triage, management, and recovery.

Creating a setting with quality medical stabilization, mental illness and substance use service and support options decreases the burden place on local emergency rooms that are not prepared to address crisis behavioral health needs including emergency detention order related services.



Opportunity for Change #5: Expand and enhance reentry and justice supported recovery options to encourage effective reintegration, reduce recidivism, improve individual opportunities for lasting recovery and promote community safety

Strategy I: Collaborate with the County of El Paso and Emergence Health network to offer program options for judges to consider as alternatives to incarceration (e.g., Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) and Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) and medication assisted therapeutic (MAT) approaches).

Strategy II: Collaborate with the County of El Paso to create successful and lasting reentry supports effectively utilizing grants from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and others. Services will include case management (>6 months support) and system navigation support, supported housing, life skills and workforce reintegration support, peer support specialists and other model programs.

Strategy III: Collaborate with the University of Texas El Paso (UTEP) and other third-party evaluators, in a research-practitioner partnership to guide grant related planning and implementation, identify and track key metrics to inform progress, and engage in modifying programs as needed to meet funded target deliverables.

Strategy IV: Increase availability of credentialed providers including providers that can provide Medication Assisted Therapy (e.g., methadone, buprenorphine, suboxone) as part of a well supported plan of care.

Value Proposition: Providing individualized case management (>6 months support) and related illness management support to encourage effective reintegration into society promotes community safety, contributes to reductions in recidivism and improves individual's opportunities for lasting recovery.

Progress Indicators: The Council will track relevant measures regarding data sharing among providers (at the individual case and system levels) and continuity of care between providers over time.

Consortium 2.0: Consortium leaders formed a sound foundation in 2015. As a result, El Paso partners have successfully increased mental health and substance use resources for the region, made significant improvements in the behavioral health system of care, and set the stage for the next phase of improvements.

The Consortium helps to foster, strengthen, and properly recognize the integral partnerships that create change in the El Paso region. With the 2021 El Paso Behavioral Health System Assessment, other related data and ongoing community feedback, El Paso County is prepared to take new steps toward achieving an ideal behavioral health system of care.

To view or download the full 2021 El Paso County Behavioral Health System Assessment, visit www.healthypasodelnorte.org.

Get Involved: The Consortium is committed to ongoing collaboration where all partners are welcome, empowered, and unified to achieve the vision.

To learn more about the El Paso Behavioral Health Consortium, the 2021 El Paso County Behavioral Health System Assessment, or the Consortium Leadership Councils, contact Enrique Mata, Executive Director, Paso del Norte Center at Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, at emata@mmhpi.org, 915-253-0287 or Sandra Day, Associate Program Officer, Paso del Norte Health Foundation, at sday@pdnfdoundation.org, 915-544-7636.



Please Note: The El Paso Behavioral Health Consortium does not provide health services of any type, such as mental health, substance abuse, or other services. The following are resources to help those seeking behavioral health services:
2-1-1 El Paso Resource Referral System - Dial 211
24-Hour Mental Health Crisis Line - Dial 9-8-8 or (915) 779-1800
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - Dial (800) 273-TALK (8255)