



Meeting Notes

February 4, 2026

3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Paso del Norte Health Foundation

Meeting Room C

221 N. Kansas, 19th Floor

El Paso, Texas 79901

Attendees:

Robert Anchondo
Yovanni Atienzo
Sharon Butterworth
Jennifer Chavez
Sandra Day
Chris Hendricks
Josue Lachica
Enrique Mata
Maggie Morales-Aina
Edythe Payan
Annabelle Perez (JLC Chair)
Julie Priego
Rhonda Russ
Nicole Schiff
Abril Silvadonay
Isidro Torres
Rene Vargas

Representing:

DWI Specialty Court/Criminal Court No. 2
Centro San Vicente Health Center
Paso del Norte Center at Meadows Institute
Emergence Health Network – Jail Based Comp Rest
Paso del Norte Health Foundation
Emergence Health Network – Chief of Corr Care
Paso del Norte Center at Meadows Institute
Paso del Norte Center at Meadows Institute
County of El Paso
El Paso County Public Defender’s Office
Judge 41st District Court
Aliviane Inc.
Emergence Health Network – Chief of CIT
Paso del Norte Center of Hope
Emergence Health Network – Chief of Diversion
NAMI El Paso
El Paso County Public Defender’s Office

Welcome

Judge Perez convened the meeting at 3:35 p.m. and called for brief introductions.

Recent Shifts in Federal Funding Judge Perez provided an overview of the recent challenges developing as a result of the Sudden termination and reactivation of funding through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. The judge emphasized that this conversation should take a positive approach to the situation in that our community partners

really do step forward to help each other in times of crisis. Ms. Julie Priego commented that the recent actions by SAMHSA were difficult and caused significant staff strains even when the termination of funding was rescinded. Judge Anchondo stated that we should have a layered plan for support. During uncertain times, this type of situation is likely to come up again. The group comments were supportive of exploring a layered approach perhaps having state level and regional (county and city) levels of support available such as rainy day funding so individuals in need have access to services at least for a short term to ensure that there are smooth transitions. It is imperative that we do our best to help the most vulnerable persons, to give them some level of protection and help them to maintain their recovery. Judge Perez also advised that steps should be taken to improve financial and organizational capacity and stability. For example, can we have our own town hall develop on demand when these types of things happen. Isidro Torres advised that NAMI El Paso is willing to provide support in gathering stakeholders when policy advocacy needs develop. Maggie advised that in past years this state had approximately 23,000 people incarcerated with active psychological concerns. By last month we were up to more than 38,000. This is cause for concern as we continue to see numbers of individuals in the justice system with serious mental health needs failing to be supported. Josue Lachica advised that funding streams to address homelessness situations, a strong contributing factor to in successful recovery, has seen similar uncertainty. For example, in past years HUD funding was committed for two years. The most recent notices of funding opportunities have been either delayed or revisited to have shorter timelines or with more stipulations for access to services. Enrique Mata commented that the PdN Center will explore possible options and update the group as appropriate.

Jail Operations

Chris Hendricks reported that the jail teams are having weekly meetings to discuss needed services. For example, every Wednesday morning there is an interdisciplinary team meeting, and on Tuesday afternoons there is a group meeting on processes to help improve jail operations. There are close to 1000 active mental health inmates, approximately 280 in the downtown jail and about 800 more at the Annex. Ms. Priego asked if virtual services could be allowed for inmates. Maggie Morales-Aina commented that groups from outside the jail system can work with clients if they are under adult probation. Ms. Eddie Payan advised that there are conditions that may prevent someone receiving care inside of the jail. Most especially the ability to provide privacy. The group discussed possible scenarios and considered legal precedents to take care of individuals' needs but also ensure that they have appropriate protections. This is an ongoing discussion. Mr. Hendricks responded to questions and shared ideas on ways to address individual needs.

Jail Based Competency

Ms. Jennifer Chavez shared that for Jail based competency restoration there is currently space for 12 males set aside in a designated pod within the jail annex. There are 9 individuals

receiving services in that pod. There are over 102 individuals waiting on the list for a state hospital bed. Only so many of these can qualify through criteria to be housed in the Jail Based Competency Program. The competency program began in March 2025 and has had 15 individuals who were found to be competent and completed the process to stand for trial. Judge Perez asked about options for external support to address the needs. Ms. Morales-Aina commented that there are solutions that can be explored. Many of them fall into what is known as [Jail Based In Reach](#) programming. Ms. Chavez responded to questions from the group.

Other Business

Ms. Sharon Butterworth recognized Judge Anchondo for the program he shared in a recent [El Paso Inc. article](#).

New Data Report

Enrique Mata advised the group. That the Health Foundation had funded an update to the quantitative data. Provided in the 2021 El Paso Behavioral Health Consortium System assessment. The updated data. Are now available and a process to gather input is underway. Mr. Mata presented the. Some summary slides. To show areas that relate to the Justice Leadership Council, he emphasized that. This data and others, along with key leadership such as the Justice Leadership Councils input will help inform A revised version of the Justice Leadership Council action plans, such as the other councils under the. El Paso Behavioral Health Consortium will also have updates. He emphasized the importance. Of having these action plans, recognizing the winds that have happened over the past few years since the last update to the action plans was done, for example. We now have programs like crisis intervention teams, mobile crisis outreach, we're developing crisis stabilization units and other programs like AOT and MIT for the community that were nonexistent at the time that the action plans. Were developed. He also advised that. The Health and Human Services Commission is under sunset. Review and evaluation of their operations will be addressed within the 80, the 90th Texas Legislative session. Senator Blanco has asked. For all. The Members to provide his their ideas for policy approaches in need of review. He says these items will be addressed In interim charges. For the legislature and asked that we provide briefs by February 13th.

Reentry

Enrique Mata shared updates from Ms. Catherine Jones who was not able to participate today:

- The El Paso Promise Diversion Program has officially begun through our Reentry Support Services unit.
- We continue to have available beds at the Opportunity Center, Rescue Mission, and Recovery Alliance.
- Our Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) is fully operational and accepting referrals.

The next Reentry Task Force meeting is scheduled for February 14.

Crisis System – 911/988 - MCOT/YCOT Ms. Rhonda Russ summarized recent progress under the MCOT/YCOT expansion providing examples of how the teams are developing positive interventions for the community. For example, under an MOU with Socorro Independent School District they was addressing needs of youth who are in truancy situations. These proactive efforts are yielding improved outcomes for the youth. Ms. Russ responded to questions from the group.

EHN Diversion Services Ms. Abril Silvadoray shared the upcoming opening of the EHN Diversion Center which includes a sobering unit. By the end of March, the sobering unit will be open at the 1600 Montana address. There will be 5 bays to begin with, with a vision for 9 to 10 additional bays to be added. Expansion of the service array within the diversion arena is growing for El Paso as a new facility will be developed on the east side of town. This new center will have capacity to serve adults and youth for crisis stabilization. Ms. Silvadoray responded to questions from the group.

Next Meeting

Judge Perez called for options to set a regular meeting time on the calendar. She proposed Wednesday afternoons at 3:30 every first week of the month or every other month. Ms. Payan advised that the jail diversion virtual meeting happens on the first Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am. The group discussed pros and cons to both meetings falling on the same day. The group agreed to meet the first Wednesday in March and April to test this approach. If it does not work, the meeting will be moved to another date.

Adjourn

Judge Perez adjourned the meeting at 4:55 pm.



EL PASO
Behavioral Health
CONSORTIUM



OF THE EL PASO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM



OF THE EL PASO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM



OF THE EL PASO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM



Justice
Leadership Council
OF THE EL PASO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

JLC February 4th Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Recent Shifts in Federal Funding
- III. Jail Operations
- IV. Other Business:
 - a) New Data Report
 - b) Justice Leadership Coordinating Committee
 - c) Reentry
 - d) Jail Diversion Committee
 - e) Crisis System – 911/988 - MCOT/YCOT
- V. Adjourn



Recent Shifts in Federal Funding



Jail Operations



Other Business



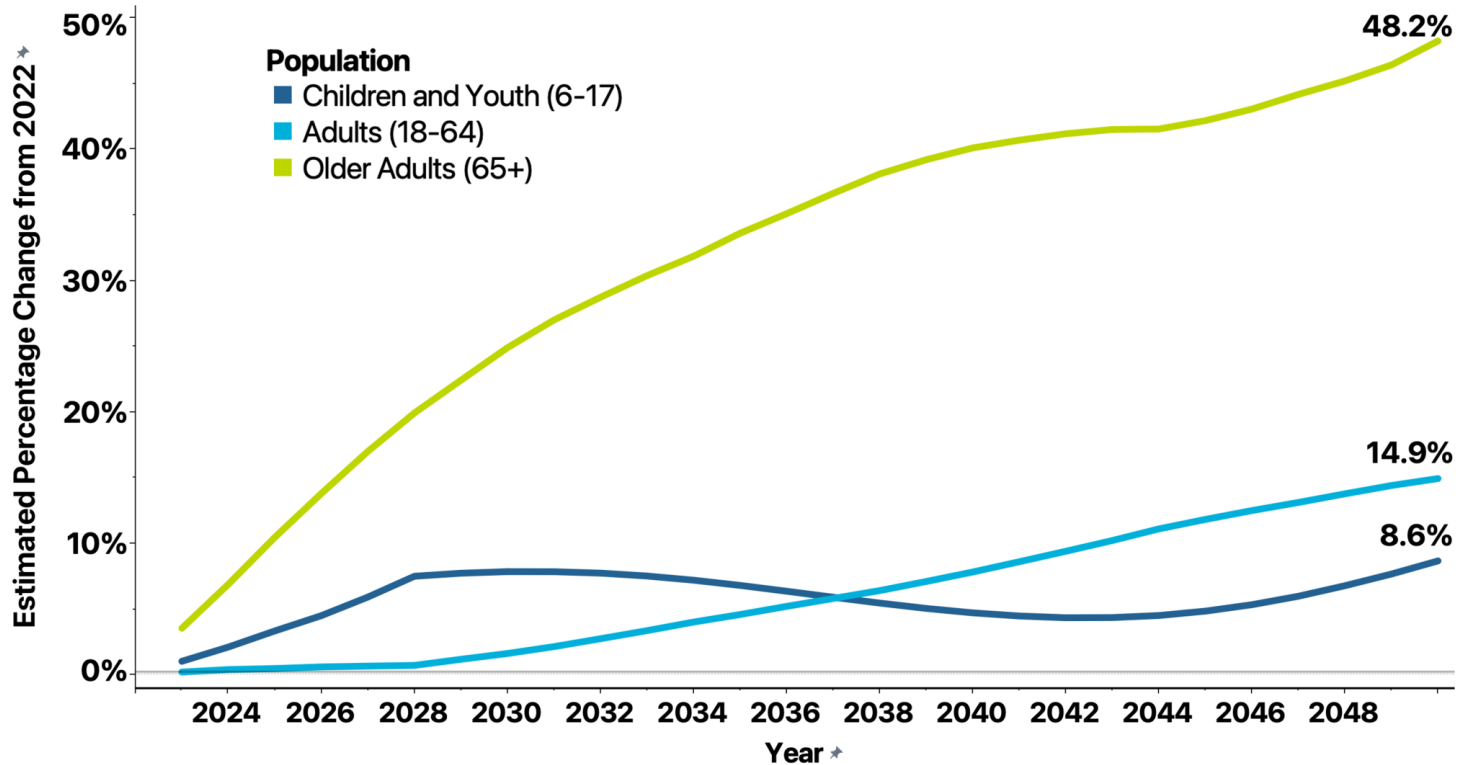
New Data Report

El Paso County Behavioral Health Assessment: 2025 Quantitative Data Update Report Highlights

Increasing Population:

- Growth is projected for all age groups through 2050, with the older adult population (65+ years) expected to grow by nearly 50%. However, El Paso's growth rate across all age groups (ages 6-17, 18-64, and 65+) is slower than the statewide projected population growth.

El Paso County Population Changes^{1, 2}



1. Population data from U.S. Census Bureau. (2023, December). American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-year data release. www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/acs-5year/2022.html
2. Population projections are generated using the American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-year estimates and expected rates of change from the Texas Demographer Population Projections Program, 2018: <https://demographics.texas.gov/data/tppepp/projections/>

Core Prevalence Data:

- In 2022, approximately 7,500 El Paso County children and youth had severe emotional disturbances, and about 29,000 adults had serious mental illnesses.

Rising Mortality Rates from Drug Overdose:

- The mortality rate from drug overdose / accidental poisoning increased by 81% between 2019 and 2023. Our data suggest:
- Access to care for substance use disorder (SUD) remains a challenge among El Pasoans - over half of youth with SUDs and 80% of adults with SUDs need but do not receive treatment. The high rates of untreated SUDs and comorbidity with mental illness indicate a critical need for integrated and accessible treatment services in the region; and,
- The reliance on self-pay for SUD-related emergency department encounters underscores the need for safety net providers and facilities to serve those with SUD.

Summary Statement:

Taken together, the data presented suggest a shifting landscape characterized by:

- population growth
- increases in demand for
 - SUD and trauma-related conditions
 - dedicated inpatient space for treating children and youth
- increases in mental health-related crises; and expanded mental health workforce (most notably, psychologists) to treat a growing population of El Pasoans.

Your Feedback is Vital:

| 14

Are there any data missing that would be helpful?

What is the best way to share results with stakeholders?

Are there any **PRIORITY** services or supports that the Consortium partners and leadership councils should focus on in the next few years?

What policy priorities should be explored for the next Texas legislative session?



Reentry Work Group




Justice Leadership Coordinating Committee



Crisis Care MCOT/YCOT



NEXT MEETINGS

 Targeted for the first Wednesday
of each month 3:30 – 5:00 pm

 **ADJOURN**

Justice Leadership Council

OF THE EL PASO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM



Justice Leadership Council
Sheriff Wiles Chair
Chrystal Davis Vice Chair


PASO del NORTE CENTER
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Facilitator/Technical Support

Jail Diversion Committee
SIM Intercepts 0,1,2

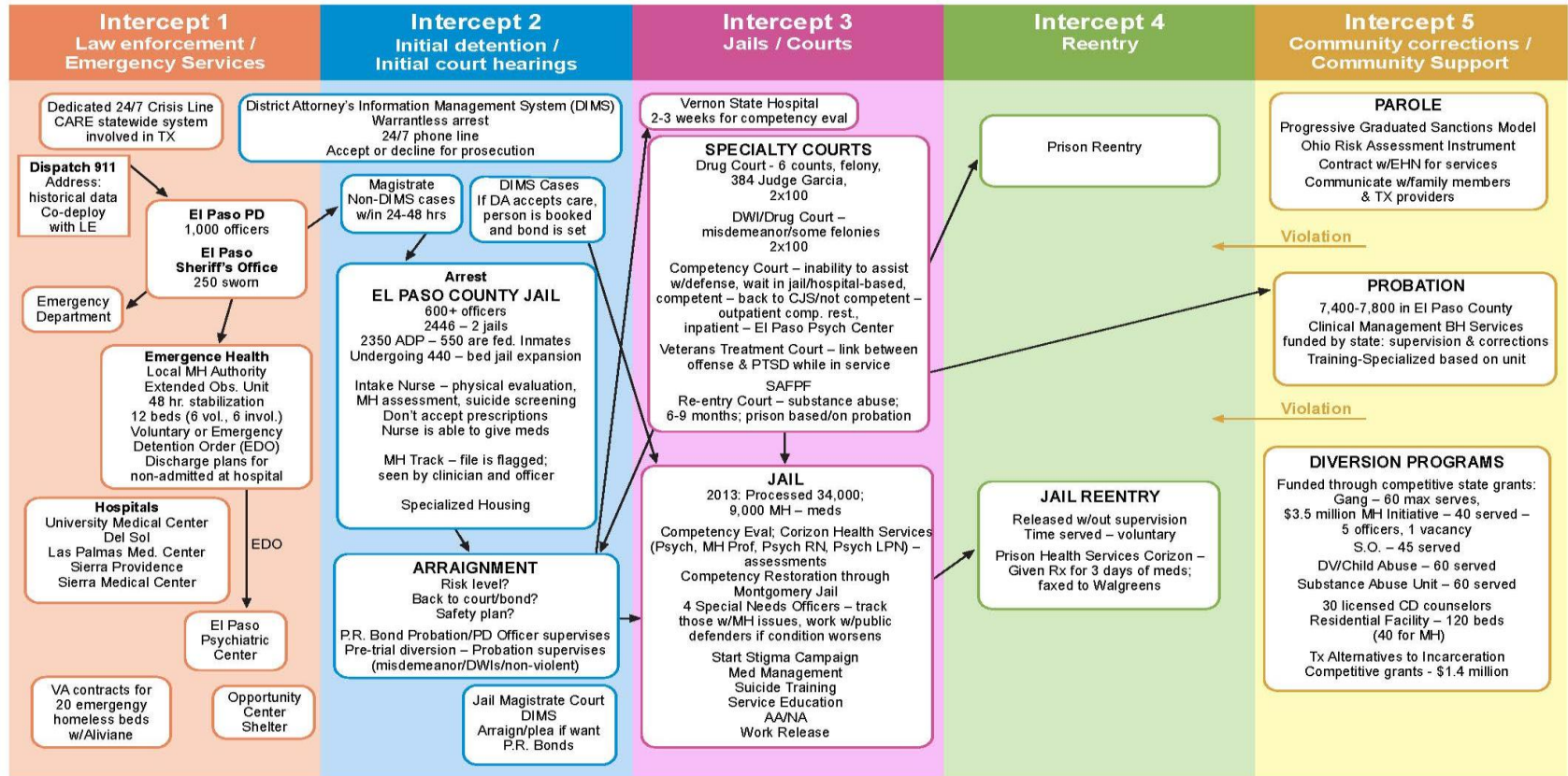


Justice Leadership Coordinating Committee

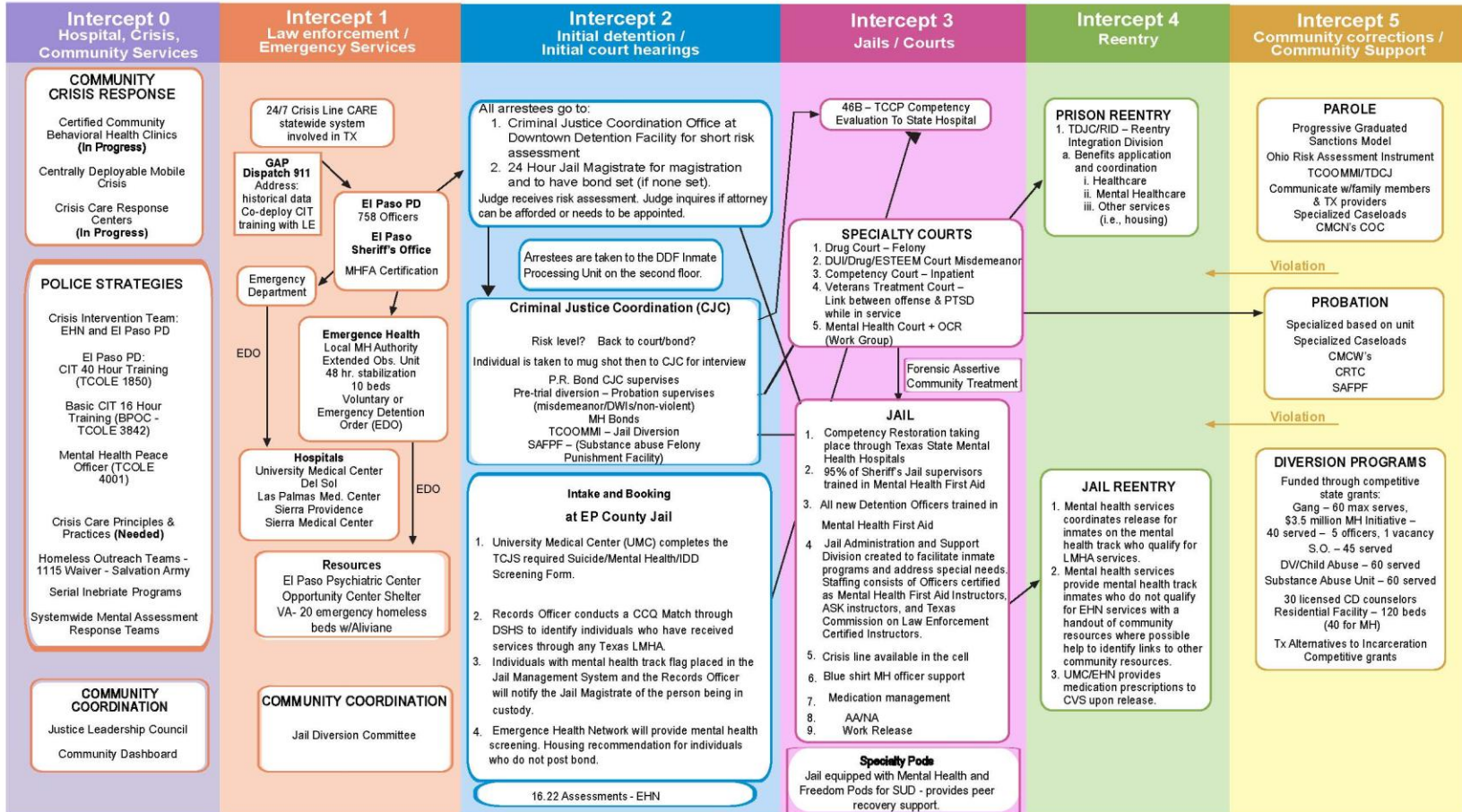


Reentry Task Force (BJA)
SIM Intercepts 3,4,5

September 2014 El Paso County, TX Sequential Intercept Map



2019 El Paso County, TX Sequential Intercept Map



SIM UPDATE 2022

Intercept 0
Community Services

- **COMMUNITY CRISIS RESPONSE**
 - Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic - 1 active EHN Clinic
 - Centrally Deployable Mobile Crisis
- Crisis Care Response Centers (*In Progress*)
- **POLICE STRATEGIES**
 - Crisis Intervention Team: EHN and El Paso PD - 14 Units
 - CIT Expansion
 - El Paso County Sheriff - 3 Units
 - City of Socorro - 2 units
 - Exploring use of tablets for Mental Health provider virtual access on site
 - El Paso PD: CIT 40 Hour Training (TCOLE 1850)
 - Basic CIT 16 Hour Training (BPOC - TCOLE 3842)
 - Mental Health Peace Officer (TCOLE 4001)
 - Crisis Care Principles & Practices (*Needed*)
 - Homeless Outreach Teams
 - Serial Inebriate Programs
 - Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Teams
 - Cohen/Endeavors Veterans Wellness Center
 - Substance use drop in (Punto de Partida)
 - project chance
- **COMMUNITY COORDINATION**
 - Justice Leadership Council
 - Community Dashboard

Intercept 1
Law Enforcement and Emergency Services

- **24/7 Crisis Line CARE** statewide system involved in Conversion to 988 System and processes
- Dispatch 911 - Explore refined dispatch with mental health professional consults
- **El Paso PD**
 - 1024 Officers
- **El Paso Sheriff's Office**
 - 240 Deputies
 - MHFA Certification
- **EMERGENCE HEALTH NETWORK - LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY**
 - Extended Obs. Unit
 - 48 hr. stabilization
 - 10 beds
 - Voluntary or Emergency Detention Order (EDO) Explore expanded availability of full service or medical clearance
- **HOSPITALS**
 - University Medical Center Del Sol
 - Las Palmas Med. Center
 - Sierra Providence Sierra Medical Center
- **RESOURCES**
 - El Paso Psychiatric Cntr.
 - Opportunity Center Shelter
 - VA- 20 emergency homeless beds w/Aliviane
 - Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH)
- **COMMUNITY COORDINATION**
 - Jail Diversion Committee
 - Re-Entry Taskforce

Intercept 2
Initial Detention and Initial Court Hearings

- **ALL ARRESTEES GO TO:**
 - Criminal Justice Coordination Office at Downtown Detention Facility for short risk assessment
 - 24 Hour Jail Magistrate for magistration and to have bond set (if none set).
 - Judge receives risk assessment. Judge inquires if attorney can be afforded or needs to be appointed.
 - Arrestees are taken to the DDF Inmate Processing Unit on the second floor.
- **CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATION (CJC)**
 - Risk level? Back to court/bond?
 - Individual is taken to mug shot then to CJC for interview
 - P.R. Bond CJC supervises
 - Pre-trial diversion - Probation supervises (misdemeanor/DWIs/non-violent)
 - MH Bonds
 - TCOOMMI - Jail Diversion
 - SAFFP - (Substance abuse Felony Punishment Facility)
- **INTAKE & BOOKING AT EP COUNTY JAIL**
 - University Medical Center (UMC) completes the TCJS required Suicide/Mental Health/IDD Screening Form.
 - Records Officer conducts a CQ Match through DSHS to identify individuals who have received services through any Texas LMHA.
 - Individuals with mental health track flag placed in the Jail Management System and the Records Officer will notify the Jail Magistrate of the person being in custody.
 - Emergence Health Network will provide mental health screening. Housing recommendation for individuals who do not post bond.

Intercept 3
Jails and Courts

- **46B - TCCP COMPETENCY EVALUATION TO STATE HOSPITAL**
- **SPECIALTY COURTS**
 - Drug Court - Felony
 - DUI/Drug/ESTEEM Court Misdemeanor
 - Competency Court - Inpatient
 - Veterans Treatment Court - Link between offense & PTSD while in service
 - Mental Health Court + OCR (Work Group)
- **FORENSIC ASSERTIVE COMMUNITY TREATMENT**
- **ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT (AOT) Service for 50 Individuals**
- **JAIL**
 - Competency Restoration taking place through Texas State Mental Health Hospitals
 - Competency Waitlist(160)
 - 112: Non-Max Security
 - 54: MaxSecurity
 - 95% of Sheriff's Jail supervisors trained in Mental Health First Aid
 - All new Detention Officers trained in Mental Health First Aid
 - Jail Administration and Support Division created to facilitate inmate programs and address special needs. Staffing consists of Officers certified as Mental Health First Aid Instructors, ASK Instructors, and Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Certified Instructors.
 - Crisis line available in the cell
 - Blue shirt MH officer support
 - Medication management
 - AA/NA
 - Work Release
- **SPECIALTY PODS**
 - Jail equipped with Mental Health and Freedom Pods for SUD - provides peer recovery support.

Intercept 4
Reentry

- **PRISON REENTRY**
 - DJC/RID - Reentry Integration Division
 - Benefits application and coordination
 - i. Healthcare
 - ii. Mental Healthcare
 - iii. Other services (i.e., housing)
- **JAIL REENTRY**
 - Mental health services coordinates release for inmates on the mental health track who qualify for LMHA services.
 - Mental health services provide mental health track inmates who do not qualify for EHN services with a handout of community resources where possible help to identify links to other community resources.
 - UMC/EHN provides medication prescriptions to CVS upon release.
- **COMMUNITY COORDINATION**
 - Re-Entry Transitional Living and Support Center (EP County - near Jail Annex)
 - Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) EHN

Intercept 5
Community Corrections and Community Support

- **PAROLE**
 - Progressive Graduated Sanctions Model
 - Ohio Risk Assessment Instrument
 - Contract w/EHN for services
 - Communicate w/family members & TX providers
- **PROBATION**
 - 7,400-7,800 in El Paso County
 - Clinical Management BH Services funded by state: supervision & corrections
 - Training-Specialized based on unit
- **DIVERSION PROGRAMS**
 - Funded through competitive state grants:
 - Gang - 60 max serves, \$3.5 million MH Initiative
 - S.O. - 45 served
 - DV/Child Abuse - 60 served
 - Substance Abuse Unit - 60 served
 - 30 licensed CD counselors Residential Facility - 120 beds (40 for MH)
 - Tx Alternatives to Incarceration Competitive grants

Preventing Isolation and Promoting Social Connection

“isolation and silos weaken our communities; without strong communities, we cannot pull together in times of hardship and our diversity turns from a source of strength to a source of conflict. **When we have strong connections with each other everything is possible”.**

- U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy