

## **JEMI VISION, GOALS, ELEMENTS & NEXT STEPS FOR NWA**

Northwest Arkansas' challenges to improving law enforcement and mental health "best practice" responses for mentally ill persons are a microcosm of our national scene. **Our JEMI coalition's long-term vision is that someday the full range of law enforcement/mental health best practices and services will be available, timely, coordinated and used 24/7/365 in our four county area.** NWA will be healthier, safer, more just and humane when this happens.

### **Major goals of this coordinated system of community responses to mentally ill persons include**

- \*NWA regional development of the full system LE/MI capacities & competencies
- \*increased public safety & safety for law enforcement officers and consumers
- \*redirection of appropriate individuals with mental illnesses from the judicial system to the health care system
- \*provision of adequate and equitable medical treatment for inmates with mental illness
- \*provision of speedy expedition of justice processes and decisions
- \*improved cost-effectiveness in the LE/MI responses interface

The Council of State Governments and Department of Justice have proposed ten essential elements that need to be present in communities for such a system to happen and the Memphis Crisis Intervention model has summarized these into three categories that are used for this briefing: **Ongoing Elements, Operational Elements and Sustaining Elements.** Attending to the development and sustenance of all these elements over time will provide the structure for solutions we need that meet the goals and result in the vision of a complete NWA regional system of law enforcement/mental health response capability. Description, notes & next steps for them in NWA follow.

### **ONGOING ELEMENTS**

1. The development and maintenance of crucial law enforcement, advocacy and mental health partnerships.
2. A focus on community ownership through joint planning, implementation, networking and shared policies & procedures development.  
**Note:** The JEMI coalition is characterized by strong partnerships and community ownership from more than 50 active participants and significant advocacy, law enforcement and mental health stakeholders' representation.  
**Next Steps:**
  - a) Keep the JEMI coalition and regional system vision alive and keep building system capacities, competencies and mutual aid agreements needed to complete the system over time.
  - b) Expand our collaborative working relationship with DHS/DBHS in support of developing regional capacities.

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- c) Formalize some JEMI stakeholder mutual aid working agreements in priority areas (e.g., endorse a model policy and procedure for timely turnaround for LE officers comparable to paramedic turnaround times that all receiving facilities honor).
- d) Increase public education about LE/MI issues & solutions
- e) Develop a planning study grant to facilitate systems development

## **OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS**

3. Law enforcement officers with state-of-the-art crisis intervention competencies for de-escalation, stabilization, observation and disposition for people behaving erratically or in mental crisis.
4. Availability of a wide range of community resources “particularly 24 hour receiving capabilities” (e.g., one crisis center, several crisis receiving facilities with comparable protocols, and/or mobile mental health crisis teams).
5. Adequate and equitable jail-based mental health services and medications.
6. Mental health courts development (e.g., a dedicated court, streamlined video commitment/adjudication hearings, broadened outpatient commitment policies & procedures).
7. Regional capacity for full range of competency evaluations and responsibility determinations.

**Note:** We’re strong on officer competencies, short on community resources and receiving capabilities, short on jail-based treatment and medication resources, may not have enough volume yet for a full mental health court and have only limited capacity for regional competency evaluations and no long term capacity for competency and responsibility evaluations.

### **Next Steps:**

- f) Provide continuing education & in-service training including “Mental Health First Aid” for all stakeholders
- g) Find additional funding for increasing jail-based mental health services, evaluation and medications (e.g., a jail-based Assertive Community Treatment program; Medicaid coverage enrollment; expanded contracts for outpatient restoration services; appropriations for increased jail-based services).
- g) Develop a receiving facility/crisis center model & funding plan that fits NWA (a top priority long term).

## **SUSTAINING ELEMENTS**

8. Evaluation and Research (for efficiency, quality, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness)..
9. Recognition and honors for key developments and exemplary performance.
10. Legislative Education and Advocacy
11. Diversified and sustained funding (from law enforcement, mental health, public and philanthropic resources).

**Note:** No full scale evaluation and research capacity exists currently, continuing education is sporadic and, few recognition and honors have happened. We're beginning legislative education this year and searching for diversified funding support for next stages of system development.

**Next Steps:**

- h) Increase legislative education about LE/MI issues & solutions.
- i) In concert with NAMI and Mental Health America, develop recognition and honors for LE/MI workers and organizations who have made outstanding efforts for system improvements
- j) Explore long-term funding options.

These short and long-term solution quests are examples of how JEMI is planning the work and working the plan for developing NWA's complete regional system of LE/MH coordinated, state-of-the-art responses to mentally ill people who encounter our justice system due to erratic behavior or mental crisis stemming from mental disorders or distress. They're the work in progress blue prints and building blocks designed to bring out the best in our LE/MI coordination and cooperation capacities and develop the necessary infrastructure and working relationships that best serve public and personal safety and add value to our constant community quest for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all.