



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

March 5, 2024

Summary and Motions

Chair Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Committee Members Ellinger, J. Brown, Fogle, Monarrez, Gray, F. Brown, Baxter, Sevigny, and Plomin were in attendance. Council Members Sheehan, Lynch, and Wu were also present as non-voting members.

I. Approval of January 23, 2024 Committee Meeting Summary

Motion by Fogle to approve the January 23, 2024 Committee Summary. Seconded by Ellinger. Motion passed without dissent.

II. Community Paramedicine Program Update

Captain Seth Lockard, with the Division of Fire and Emergency Services, began the presentation with a history of the Community Paramedicine Program. In 2018, they received a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Grant for opioid follow-up and they were able to hire their first social worker. In 2020, they received another BJA Grant for continued opioid follow-up and they hired a second social worker. He spoke about outside funding sources, which includes a variety of grants received.

Lockard reviewed how referrals are processed from intranet, email, and community members and the benefit the referrals and data analysis have been for the team. He mentioned that paramedicine work is locally defined and with 10 programs functioning Kentucky, each one is different. Each program is based on individual community needs and that is what makes the program unique. He shared data from 2023 and explained the team followed up with 735 unique individuals and 321 of those had sustained an overdose. There were over 1,800 individuals who experienced an overdose event in Lexington and over 850 packages of Narcan were distributed to the community.

Looking forward, they have allocated 2 additional firefighters for spring 2024. COSSUP (Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program) will hire two more Overdose Prevention Project Coordinators and one Peer Support Specialist. There is also a grant that was awarded in January that will be a collaboration between the Lexington Police Department. The funding is from Kentucky Department for Medicaid Services that will create a crisis response unit in our community and a Behavioral Health Specialist will assist with calls from first response units to provide the most appropriate response.

Wells and Lockard spoke about the success of the program. Speaking about proactiveness and if we are getting enough grants, Lockard said we get a lot of the ones we can apply for. Speaking about the actual cost to make the program run effectively, Wells said the community decides what level of protection they want, but the cost would be largely for salaries and space. When asked if the peer support specialist will be someone who can truly relate and make a difference, Lockard said that is the goal for this position. When asked what the big dream is for the program, Wells said the growth to continue to meet the needs. Wells spoke about the dramatic decrease in cases and said the team was overwhelmed with the number of needs in the community. Speaking about frequent flyers and if this is something that is being addressed, Lockard said they are still there, but the team is helping with that. We must continue to provide data and the overall impact to show the program is working. No Action was taken on this item.

III. Domestic & Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition

Stephanie Theakston, Program Coordinator with Department of Social Services, provided the update on Domestic & Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition which is established through ordinance. For decades domestic violence has been recognized as a national epidemic. She explained that domestic and sexual violence are intersecting issues. If we can reduce trauma at home, we can reduce mental health issues. She reviewed some programs associated with domestic violence such as Green Dot which is an evidence-based prevention program that trains active bystanders to stop violence before it occurs. There is also the housing stability program in which \$60,000 has assisted 247 adult and child survivors. She spoke about outreach and awareness and said October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. She mentioned resources which include the survivor handbook, SUPPORT survivors, and decision tree and she spoke about the *It's Time* campaign. Moving forward, she said areas of focus are men, immigrants, faith communities, children, workplaces, and continue promoting existing content.

Speaking about VOCA funds and pointing out that \$800 seems low, Theakston said that's what can be provided, and it helps victims get out of their situation. It was noted that this is also helpful considering the veto the governor recently passed regarding the ban on source of income because VOCA hands out vouchers as well. When asked what they want from the Council, Theakston said messages of support in newsletters and things like that. She mentioned she would be happy to speak at neighborhood meetings or other engagements well.

When asked about supporting survivors in the workplace, Theakston said sometimes the workplace doesn't understand. If it is disclosed, it should be excused. Theakston pointed out some of the agencies we rely on are the Nest, Greenhouse 17, Law Enforcement, Courts, Ampersand, etc. When asked how we measure awareness campaigns in terms of success, Theakston said so far it is by engagement or number of people who participated or number of people who are aware. No action was taken on this item.

IV. Items Referred to Committee

No action was taken on this item.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.