



TO: Durham County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Gudrun Parmer, CJRC Director

THRU: Jodi Miller, General Manager

DATE: 9 July 2020

RE: County Staff Feedback on the City of Durham's Proposed Durham Community Safety and Wellness Task Force Bylaws

This document contains some suggested revisions to the functions proposed in the City of Durham's Durham Community Safety and Wellness Task Force Bylaws, as well as a compilation of feedback from other County departments and criminal justice groups. If feasible, it is respectfully suggested that the wording in the duties section of the bylaws be revised. The proposed new wording would emphasize and focus on community concerns and potential outcomes rather than singling out specific existing programs. The revised wording could read as follows:

- Evaluate the feasibility of and make recommendations for the implementation of services to address the following community needs and concerns to the Durham City Council, the Durham County Board of Commissioners, Durham Public Schools, and the Durham County District Attorney's Office:
 - School safety programs in every Durham County elementary, middle and high school.
 - Court diversion programs or other alternative sentencing options for individuals with substance use or mental health disorders and/or related charges.
 - An expanded violence interrupter program which trains formerly justice-involved residents to intervene in situations of violence to prevent escalation – possibly including a cohort specializing in domestic violence to focus on intervention and prevention.
 - Community nonviolence, mental health first aid, and de-escalation training programs, focusing on residents who are most likely to be victims or perpetrators of violence.



- On-call crisis response, which would allow certain calls for law enforcement assistance to be handled by other trained professionals such as social workers, crisis counselors, psychiatric nurses, etc.

Furthermore, I would recommend that the Task Force coordinate and collaborate with existing city and county committees (e.g. Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, Crime Cabinet, Sheriff's Community Advisory Board) that may have years of experience and expertise to share. The Durham County Criminal Justice Advisory Committee which consists of representatives from the Courts, local government, law enforcement and human service agencies, as well as a broad range of community-based organizations and community members, supported and endorsed the above suggestions at its regular meeting on June 30, 2020.

Additionally, Chair Jacobs requested that other County departments and agencies review and provide additional feedback. The received responses are as follows:

- Sheriff Birkhead, as previously shared, endorsed law enforcement being included in the task force membership.
- The Director of Social Services Ben Rose, offered the support and expertise of a domestic violence social worker to the task force as needed.
- Department of Public Health staff shared that the Cure Violence model does cite domestic violence as one of the adaptations of the model that they have implemented, but it is not a part of their core evidence-based practice. Therefore, it would probably require additional technical assistance and conceptual integration of that work with the existing Health Education & Community Transformation Division framework, beyond just identifying a new cohort of violence interrupters.
- EMS community paramedicine staff suggested a Nurse Health Line that the Stepping Up Initiative Committee has been exploring for some time while developing community alternatives to reduce the number of individuals with mental illness in detention including crisis intervention is worth further exploration.
- Alliance Health staff indicated they had no feedback at this time.

If the Board supports some or all of the recommended suggestions in this memorandum, the proposed next step is to forward those recommendations to the City of Durham and the Board of Education for further consideration.