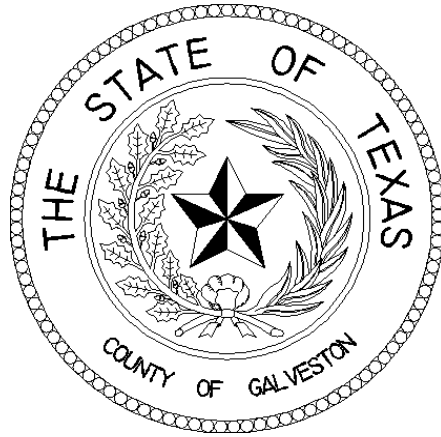


Galveston County



Community Plan 2011-2012

November 2011

Galveston County Community Plan

What Is a Community Plan?

This plan is formally known as the Galveston County Criminal Justice Community Plan, the purpose of which is to identify gaps in services regarding criminal justice issues. The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that each county in Texas have a Criminal Justice Community Plan.

The document that is represented here reflects the efforts of many in Galveston County who are concerned with assuring that any gaps in services that are identified are closed in a way that will both solve the problem and provide as great a benefit to the community as possible. It is with grateful acknowledgement that the names of those involved in the process of developing this plan are listed in the Community Planning Team focus groups on Pages 4-5 and again on Pages 34-35.

Though revisions to this plan were completed in December 2009, this is a work in progress. The plan is updated at least once annually to reflect new criminal justice goals, changes in planning group membership, changing agency circumstances, and requirements concerning the makeup of the Plan. Unanticipated events, such as the devastation suffered by our communities and the challenges to recover from Hurricane Ike, also affect community planning from year to year. The state of the local economy plays has a major impact on the issues addressed in this plan.

If you are reading this Plan and have not been involved in its development, you are invited to participate. Any questions you may have can be addressed to either Connie Nicholson, Community Plan Coordinator for Galveston County, or to the Criminal Justice Program of the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Contact information is provided on Pages 32-33.

The Galveston County Commissioners Court supports the concept of community planning by providing staff support and resources for development and implementation of the Galveston County Community Plan. Additionally, the Commissioners Court generally supports grant applications from county departments as well as community organizations that address gaps in services identified in the Community Plan.

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

Bayou Vista	Clear Lake Shores	Dickinson	Friendswood
Galveston	Hitchcock	Jamaica Beach	Kemah
La Marque	League City	Santa Fe	Texas City
Tiki Island			

Unincorporated Communities:

Alta Loma	Arcadia	Algoa	Bacliff
Bayview	Crystal Beach	Gilchrist	High Island
Port Bolivar	San Leon		

School Districts:

Clear Creek ISD	Dickinson ISD	Friendswood ISD
Galveston ISD	High Island ISD	Hitchcock ISD
La Marque ISD	Santa Fe ISD	Texas City ISD

Brief description and history of Galveston County:

Galveston County lies approximately 30 miles south of Houston on the Upper Texas Gulf Coast. Galveston County (named for Bernardo de Galvez, the Spanish hero of the American Revolution) had an estimated 2006 population of 283,551 (*U. S. Census Bureau*), making it the state's 13th most populous county. A steady growth rate of about 13.3 % from April 2000 to July 2008 has been fueled by its proximity to Johnson Space Center and the City of Houston as well as strong housing growth and tourism. Principal industries in addition to tourism include petrochemical manufacturing and refining, insurance, government and health care.

The island city of Galveston is home to the sprawling University of Texas Medical Branch east of the historic Strand shopping district, and Texas A&M-Galveston, a marine sciences-oriented university situated on Pelican Island. The Port of Galveston is enjoying resurgence thanks to the growth of the city's cruise ship business, now ranked in the top five nationally in terms of passengers. In addition to The Historic Strand shopping district, island visitors have a host of destinations to enjoy including the busy beachfront hotels and restaurants, Moody Gardens, the Lone Star Flight Museum and the historic tall ship *Elissa*.

Galveston's economy has benefited in recent years from beachfront business and residential development, the investment of more than \$100 million in a new Galveston County courts-jail complex north of Broadway Avenue, and the conversion of many downtown buildings into loft apartments and tourism-related businesses.

Mainland Galveston County has benefited from the same encouraging development, with new roofs rising in virtually every city. Accompanying this new growth, especially in the League City-Friendswood area, are many new schools and improved roads.

Hurricane Ike made landfall September 12, 2008, with that many changes have occurred in Galveston County. Resources to assist the needs of this community have been impacted, organizations do not have the means to assist as they did pre- Ike, and care facilities have lost the ability to offer the services they once provided. The economic down turn of our nation has added to this burden. All of which enhance an even greater need for programs in Galveston County.

Community Planning Team

Community Plan Coordinator for Galveston County: Connie Nicholson, Grants Coordinator, Office of Finance and Administration (281-534-8442 or 409-770-5355).

In developing this Community Plan, members of the team were divided into several focus groups for the purpose of narrowing the scope of research and data that are incorporated into the Plan. Some members may serve in multiple capacities and may provide assistance to more than one group:

Juvenile Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Faith Garate (chair)	Galveston County Juvenile Justice Dept.
Cindy Schulz	Gulf Coast Big Brothers-Big Sisters
Jennifer Hart	Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol
Mari Berend	American Red Cross
Marsha Wilson-Rappaport	St. Vincent's House

John Barnett
Dotti L. Jones

Innovative Alternatives, Inc.
Barbour's Chapel

Victim Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Denise Bennett (chair)	Advocacy Center
Bonnie Martin	Resource and Crisis Center
Rachel Leal	Criminal District Attorney's Office
Pam Massey	Resolve it
Constance Rossiter	YMCA International Services
Kimberly Wiseburn	Children's Protective Services
Rhonda Harvey	Family Service Center

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Carla Costello	Texas City Police Department
Lisa Price	Friendswood Police Department
Marsha Wilson-Rappaport	St. Vincent's House
Ray Tuttoilmondo (chair)	Galveston County Sheriff's Office

Mental Health:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Julie Purser	Family Service Center
Marsha Rappaport	St. Vincent's House

Concerned Citizens:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>
Jim Mahood	HGAC
Jeff Kaufman	HGAC
Jackie Damewood	HGAC
Connie Nicholson	Galveston County Grants Office

Identification of Community Problems

General Public Safety Needs and Issues

In each of the areas below, problems are identified and data is included that supports both the existence and severity of the problems as they are found in Galveston County. Below is a discussion of the problems, the manner in which the problems are being addressed, and how responses to these community problems could be improved.

Juvenile Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Identified Problem

Data Collection

1. Delinquency

- Number of referrals to the Galveston County Juvenile Justice Department for felony offenses during 2010: 254
- Number of referrals to GCJJD for misdemeanor behavior during 2010: 443. Number of referrals for violation of court order and contempt of magistrate order during 2010: 563. Total number of misdemeanor referrals in 2010: 1006
- During 2010 there were 241 adjudications to probation affecting 222 juveniles in Galveston County.
- Total referrals to juvenile probation departments statewide, 2008 (latest year available): 99,276, per TJPC.
- Number of juveniles arrested statewide, 2008: 134,024 (77,287 referred to juvenile probation departments) per TJPC
- Number of Galveston County juveniles committed to the Texas Youth Commission in FY 2011: 8.

Discussion

There are several patterns of delinquency, some of them overlapping. Offenders may be violent or non-violent, first-time or habitual. Some tend toward gang behavior while others follow a track leading them to increasingly violent actions such as aggravated assault, rape and murder. The Community Planning Group believes it is important to focus resources toward specific types of delinquency patterns, as well as to the progression and development of offenses.

A host of agencies and organizations are focusing their efforts on juvenile issues. Key agencies include the Galveston County Juvenile Justice Department, the Galveston County Criminal District Attorney, the Family District Court and three County Courts, Children's

Protective Services, Justice of the Peace courts, and the court-appointed Juvenile Referee. Nearly every day of the week the professionals working in these agencies and organizations cross paths as they work on behalf of troubled youths.

Local law enforcement agencies, school-based police departments, truancy programs and attendance offices are instrumental in responding to the demands and needs of youth. The school districts also offer myriad services to address students' health, mental health, education and social needs. Many non-profits, including faith-based organizations, focus their efforts on troubled young people.

Despite community efforts, hundreds of Galveston County youths each year fail to overcome the challenges presented by their environment. Lack of supervision, family discord, substance abuse and other factors contribute to truancy, delinquency and possible failure in adult life.

The community could better respond to delinquency problems if resources were available for the following:

- Expand mental health screening, assessment and counseling for youth in general as a preventive measure to meet their mental health needs and avoid entry into the juvenile justice system; acute mental health crisis care; and readily accessible outpatient care
- Expand resources to target specific patterns of delinquent behavior
- Provide re-entry services, including case management, to help youths reintegrate into schools and families
- Develop support/education/training groups to help parents promote good citizenship of their children
- Continue emphasis on tougher sanctions and effective reintegration to maintain progress made on violent crime rate among juveniles
- Promote greater participation in parenting programs for young adults with small children
- Develop and coordinate a network of group services focused on anger management, anti-bullying, truancy reduction, and family crisis management

Identified Problem

2. Children in need of supervision (“CINS”)

Data Collection

- Number of juveniles referred to GCJJD for CINS behavior in 2010 including truancy, runaways, theft, disorderly conduct and liquor law violations: 72
- CINS referrals statewide, 2008: 15,070 (Texas Juvenile Probation Commission)

Discussion

The Galveston County Juvenile Justice Department received 72 referrals concerning CINS children during 2010.

The lack of adequate and consistent supervision by the family and the community is a major contributing factor to delinquency and anti-social behavior among Galveston County's youths. Family conflict and discord leads many teens to escape abusive and dangerous situations for the comfort of friends and relatives in circumstances which may jeopardize the safety and well-being of the child, where the respite is temporary at best. Many would benefit from the filing of a CINS petition, but others, such as those exhibiting sexual behavior problems, require much closer supervision. Poorly supervised children are exposed to danger and risk, and are more likely to engage in anti-social behavior. This includes truants, dropouts and runaways as well as children who are attending school but lack after-school supervision.

Big Brothers & Big Sisters is the oldest and the largest one-to-one youth mentoring organization in the United States that matches caring adults with children between the ages of six and seventeen who primarily come from low-income, single parent homes and live in an environment surrounded by poverty and crime. Mentoring is a proven way of improving life for at-risk kids. A child who meets with a mentor one hour a week for a year is 46% less likely to start using drugs, 27% less likely to start drinking, 52% less likely to skip a day of school and more likely to earn higher grades, and 33% less likely to hit someone. Mentoring works because it helps these at-risk kids overcome the negative influences in their life so that they can grow up to be productive, self-sufficient and successful members of their community. Mentoring plays a major role in contributing to brighter futures for our children, better schools, and stronger communities for all.

Response to the problems associated with children in need of supervision could be improved by undertaking the following measures:

- Expand access to residential care, community counseling, day programming, secure care, post-confinement programs, mental health residential treatment and respite care.
- Expand access to after-school programs for "latchkey" children
- Expand shelter, treatment and counseling for homeless and "throwaway" youths
- Expand truancy intervention programs countywide
- Expand opportunities to provide early intervention for first-time offenders
- Expand Saturday workshops for juveniles and parents as a truancy prevention and intervention countywide

Identified Problem

3. Substance abuse by youths and parents

Data Collection

- Number of MIP's (youth 20 and under) citations/arrests in Galveston County in 2005-2007: 248 (Source: Galveston County Law Enforcement)
- Number of alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities (youth and adult) in Galveston County in 2001-2005: 111 (Source: NHTSA – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)
- NHTSA shows 60% of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related in Galveston County. The National Average is 30%. Galveston County is also above the state percentage which is at 46%.
- Senior High Schoolers (ages 14-18) stated their average age of first use of an alcoholic beverage was between the ages of 11-15. (Source: Various Galveston County Independent School District's)
- Drug of choice for youth (grades 6-12) in Galveston County is alcohol. (Source: 02-07 state, regional and school data, TP11, NSDUH)

Identified Problem

4. Drop-Out Abatement

Data Collection

According to the Intercultural Development Research Association:

- At 29 percent, the overall attrition rate was less than 30 percent for the first time in 25 years.
- About three of every 10 students from the freshman class of 2006-07 left school prior to graduating with a high school diploma – meaning, Texas public schools are failing to graduate one out of every three students.
- The gaps between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students and Black students are dramatically higher than 25 years ago. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students has increased from 7 to 18 percentage points, and the gap between the rates of White students and Hispanic students has increased from 18 to 24 percentage points. (IDRA, 2010)

Discussion

The significant drop-out rate in Texas creates consistent pressure on law enforcement as many unemployed, underemployed youth fall prey to those promoting criminal activities. Although it should be noted that in this same study, Galveston County's rate has actually decreased since a high of near 40% overall for all demographics in 1999, the attrition rate is for all groups still hovers in the 30% range. Approximate 1/3 of all those who enter high school simply don't finish. (IDRA,2010) Law enforcement officers who man our jails can certainly attest to the educational levels of most of their populations.

However according to a report on NPR: *By the Numbers:*

- 75 percent of state prison inmates and 59 percent of federal inmates are high-school dropouts.
- High-school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than graduates to be incarcerated.
- Dropouts contribute disproportionately to the unemployment rate. In 2001, 55 percent of young adult dropouts were employed, compared to 74 percent of high-school graduates and 87 percent of college graduates.
- Dropouts contribute to state and federal tax coffers at about one-half the rate of high-school graduates. Over a working lifetime, a dropout will contribute about \$60,000 less.
- The 23 million high-school dropouts aged 18-67 will contribute roughly \$50 billion less annually in state and federal taxes.
- Studies suggest the United States would save \$41.8 billion in health care costs if the 600,000 young people who dropped out in 2004 were to complete one additional year of education.
- If 33 percent of dropouts graduated from high school, the federal government would save \$10.8 billion each year in food stamps, housing assistance, and temporary assistance for needy families.
- Testifying before Congress, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said dropouts cost the United States "more than \$260 billion... in lost wages, lost taxes and lost productivity over their lifetimes."

St. Vincent's House is currently housing a new program, the Galveston Alternative Education Center which provides TEA High School Diplomas to youth referred by the Galveston County Court System. The program which educates a maximum of 40 students per extended school year, has a wide age range of youth who have been removed from G.I.S.D. – Galveston Independent School District for a number of offenses. Students as young as age 7 can be referred to the GAEC.

This project was considered to have merit and was awarded a grant by the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of Governor Rick Perry for one year and if successful is eligible for reapplication and continued support.

The Galveston Alternative Educational Center provides educational services and rehabilitation which are designed to prevent further criminal activity that will lead to future interaction with the Juvenile Justice System of Texas for students at a point where they are referred to GAEC by the Galveston County Court System after their permanent expulsion

from the Galveston Independent School District. This program is compliance with the focus area of Juvenile Justice System Impact. This program provides instruction and pro-social activities that encourage youth that have been referred by the Galveston Court system, to finish High School, move forward to higher education and have no further contact with the Juvenile Justice System in Texas.

As of January 12, 2010) 10 graduated with TEA approved H.S. Diplomas in June 2009. 6 Graduated with TEA approved H.S. Diplomas in Fall of 2009. 2. Goal: To provide pro-social programming that deters students from any further criminal activity. Objective: To retrain students and prevent any further negative contact by students with the Juvenile Justice system in Texas.

Out of the 28 students who came directly from the Juvenile Justice system to GAEC only 4 have repeated their offenses and 2 were incarcerated. As of May 2010, 5 students were accepted are currently students at Galveston College; 1 student was accepted and serves in the U.S. Navy; 2 were accepted and serve in the U.S. Army; 1 is enrolled in Sam Houston State University.

However this program like others programs have gaps in services that need to be addressed. For instance many of the students, like their counterparts in G.I.S.D. will be older when they finally graduate. There is no “follow-up” for these students to provide advanced training, except to send them to the Workforce Commission. Many of these students like their counterparts in G.I.S.D. do not have the desire or the skill sets to go to college or the military. There are no vocational programs in Galveston County that will teach them a skilled trade. Galveston College, now struggling with funding, has classes for truck driving – a growing field and Welding. However, the backgrounds of these particular students, frequently act as obstacles to employment. Unfortunately, although the military is a good option for many youth who benefit from the discipline and training, recent recruitment standards, have eliminated youth whose criminal records –even as juveniles present a problem. Moreover, these students need Assistance finding resources for Vocational Education, or Business Education outside the County. Those that do have retail or hospitality skills need help with Resumes and Job Applications.

Response to the problems associated with Drop-Out abatement for Adjudicated juveniles could be improved by undertaking the following measures:

- Provide access to advanced training or vocational programs.
- Expand access to resources for programs outside Galveston County
- Expand access to resources to provide help preparing applications, resumes and interviews.

Victim Issues: (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Identified Problem

Data Collection

1. Domestic violence and children

- Number of confirmed victims of abuse and neglect, Children’s Protective Services, 2010: 578
- Number of CPS investigations completed, 2010: **2,259**
- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2010) in substitute care: **382**
- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2008) in foster care: **177**
- Reports of Domestic Violence in Galveston County: **2,256** (2010 TDPS, Crime in Texas Report)

Discussion

Domestic violence places children at risk for direct injury and decreased supervision while contributing to the development of physically and sexually aggressive behaviors, substance abuse, and decreased academic performance. Children victimized by domestic violence in turn tend to react in violent ways to their environment. Victims of domestic violence are subject to repeat attacks in part because there are no intervention programs (other than anger management) in Galveston County for batterers. Often Spanish-speaking adults ordered to attend anger management classes find that instruction is available only in English.

In 2010, Galveston County Children’s Protective Services reported 578 confirmed victims of abuse and neglect, following 2,259 investigations. Actual numbers of children in state care have increased every year since 2000. Three-hundred eighty-two children were in substitute care during 2010, while 177 were in foster care. Additionally there were three fatalities related to child abuse and/or neglect in 2010.

The Advocacy Center for Children of Galveston County coordinates a multidisciplinary approach to the investigation, assessment, prosecution and treatment of sexual and serious physical abuse of children. Services include forensic interviewing, family advocacy, case management, therapy and sexual assault exams referrals. Coordination in all aspects of the investigation, treatment and prosecution of these cases is crucial for mental health and medical treatment, protecting the children from further abuse and developing sound prosecutorial cases.

Resolve It, provides counseling services to child victims of domestic violence, abuse and neglect who reside in the Dickinson/Bacliff area who attend Dickinson ISD schools. Services are school based.

The Resource and Crisis Center of Galveston County shelters hundreds of women and children (and occasionally, men) throughout the year. These individuals and many others receive a host of non-residential services as well. In addition, the agency has a Legal

Department which handles Protective Orders. The RCC has recently been awarded a grant to provide therapy services to survivors of domestic violence and adult sexual assault survivors. The RCC has begun establishing groundwork for transitional housing.

In the north county, the Friendswood Police Department's Crime Victim Assistance Program provides a host of services to victims and their families. In Harris County, Bay Area Turning Point and Innovative Alternatives, Inc. provide services to some Galveston County victims. Bay Area Turning Point operates a shelter and provides aid to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Innovative Alternatives, Inc. provides 6 hours of free individual counseling and up to 18 hours of free group sessions for crime victims.

Lone Star Legal Aid and the District Attorney's Office assist victims as they are able within their respective mandates. Clients are seen in a timely manner and cases are assessed quickly, though the growing number of cases represents a significant challenge for the attorneys and victims' representatives dedicated to this mission. The District Attorney's Office was awarded a grant from the Governor's Criminal Justice Division to hire a child and elderly abuse prosecutor during FY06, helping to address a portion of this rising caseload.

Despite these varied services, the Community Planning Group believes there are insufficient resources to meet, in a timely manner, the needs of all persons who are in situations of domestic violence. There are insufficient mental health resources for child and adult victims of abuse. There is also a need for legal aid to assist the indigent with the civil and criminal aspects of their crises. In addition, batterers have few treatment options or intervention programs available to help stop the cycle of domestic violence.

Support services and basic needs, including child care and housing, are lacking for many residents experiencing domestic problems. Exacerbating the situation is the lack of coordination in the delivery of services to more effectively assess, serve, refer, and track individuals in need.

Response to issues surrounding domestic violence and child abuse could be improved by focusing on the following strategies:

- Increased violence prevention training for potential victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Expand long-term counseling for all survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Expand legal assistance for survivors of domestic violence – specifically a family law attorney to assist survivors of domestic violence who wish to permanently remove themselves and their family from the abuser through divorce and custody proceedings.
- Expand training and education for all professionals dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault

- Expand funding for dedicated victim liaisons in police departments
- Establish programs/services which empower families with safe and effective strategies to prevent the escalation of conflict to violence.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

2. “Throwaway” and homeless youths

- Number of youths 18-20 served each day by The Children’s Center transitional living program for older homeless youth: **16** (at capacity since opening)
- Number of homeless parents, children, and older homeless youths accessing emergency shelter services at the Galveston Island Family Crisis Center: **37** (full occupancy since opening in 1998)

Discussion

Many Galveston County children have been abandoned to the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems by parents who are no longer capable of controlling them or interested in providing for them. Factors contributing to the breakdown in family structure include loss of employment and/or loss of housing, substance abuse, and violent behavior.

While many independent-minded youths stay with friends or relatives after their home life is shattered, others have no option but to sleep on the streets or seek extremely limited bed space at shelters. These youths may become easy marks for drug pushers and sexual predators, and the likelihood of them staying in school without a support structure diminishes rapidly.

Many of the programs which previously and effectively intercepted many of these youths, including the Yeager Youth Crisis Center, Galveston Island Family Shelter, Galveston Project for Education of Homeless Children and The Children’s Center, all located in Galveston are no longer in existence or are not able to provide services to the level of need due to funding cuts and inability to recover after Hurricane Ike in 2008. These facilities ave historically assisted adolescents who have been abandoned by their families, have run away from abusive homes, have reached 18 and are no longer eligible for CPS services, or otherwise have no permanent residence. There is great need to secure funding for services for this population.

For some young offenders, their confinement at the Esmond Juvenile Justice Center operated by Galveston County is exactly the structure they need. Unfortunately these youths soon return to the fractured environment that led to their delinquency in the first place.

There has been increased awareness regarding Human Trafficking on National, State and Local levels. YMCA International Services does currently cover some services to Galveston County regarding this issue; however, more focus needs to be directed toward identifying the impact of this issue in Galveston County and developing a plan to address it.

Services for “throwaway” and homeless youths could be improved if funding were available for the following efforts:

- Expand opportunities for family counseling in schools, churches and the non-profit community
- Provide education so that youth can read, write and be knowledgeable in living skills and job acquiring skills.
- Establish a shelter and expand transitional living opportunities on the island and mainland
- Develop a task force to investigate the impact of Human Trafficking in Galveston County and develop a plan/services to address it (identification, awareness and training).
- Develop coordinated effort to transition young offenders back into their environment following their release from the juvenile justice system such as a home based “wrap around” plan.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

3. Child survivors

- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2010) in substitute care: **382**
- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2010) in foster care: **177**
- Galveston County children available for adoption (CPS, 2010): **24**
- Number of children receiving in-home services through CPS, 2010: **1,148**

Discussion

Galveston County children continue to be at-risk for personal injury. If they are fortunate enough to survive an attack, their prospects for escaping violent situations later in life are bleak.

As reflected under identified problem #1, “Domestic violence and children,” the statistics of child abuse cases investigated by CPS in 2010 and the numbers of confirmed victims reflects the continuing need for services to child survivors of abuse, domestic violence and witnesses to those same acts.

Children who are exposed to and survive child abuse and other acts of violence are 58% more likely to become involved in violent crime as a child than children who are not exposed to violence, national statistics reveal. They also are more likely to be involved in violent crime as an adult.

Because of limited resources, government agencies and non-profits mostly focus on victims’ immediate needs rather than long-term prospects. These immediate needs are well-served through the collaborative efforts of Children’s Protective Services, the Galveston

County Juvenile Justice Department, Galveston County Social Services, the Galveston County District Attorney’s Office, child abuse investigators with the Friendswood Police Department and the Sheriff’s Office, the Advocacy Center for Children, the Family Service Center, Innovative Alternatives, the Resource and Crisis Center, Beacon House, and many other agencies. However, more resources are needed by these agencies to ensure survivors of sexual abuse and violent crimes do not revisit violent situations in the future.

Survivors of violent crimes could be better served if more resources were available for the following:

- Expand long-term counseling for survivors of child abuse
- Expand legal assistance for families of survivors of crimes (divorces for moms in sexual assault of a child; child custody for grandparents when parents have abandoned, etc.)
- Provide additional assistant district attorneys to prosecute child victim and domestic violence cases
- Expand resources needed for court preparation, support and liaison services for child victims/witnesses and non-offending family members, through conclusion of their cases
- Continue Drug Endangered Children’s (DEC) program for handling children found in dangerous drug environments.
- Provide ongoing child abuse training for all entities involved in child abuse investigation and treatment.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

4. Elder survivors

- Population of elderly (age 65-plus) in Galveston County: **32,821**
- Number of Galveston County Adult Protective Services (APS) clients receiving services, 2010: **805** (Department of Family & Protective Services)
- Number of APS investigations completed, 2010: **1,014** (Department of Family & Protective Services)
- Number of APS investigations confirmed, 2010: **756** (Department of Family & Protective Services)

Discussion

Elderly people may be isolated, ill without a capable person to care for them, or without resources to meet basic needs. This makes them an easy target and very susceptible to situations of abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Texas has more than 2.1 million residents age 65 or older, nearly half of them disabled. More than 80% of the allegations of maltreatment that are validated in APS in-home cases include neglect.

Abuse can be physical, mental, or a combination of the two. Neglect may result in starvation, dehydration, over- or under-medication, or unsuitable living conditions.

Exploitation of the person's resources such as identity theft, misuse of financial resources, or internet victimization also is common. Maltreatment of the elderly can be the act of a caretaker, family member, or other individual (known or unknown) to the victim.

To help prevent victimization of the elderly, the Galveston County Parks and Senior Services Division sought and received a grant from the Kempner Fund to provide legal assistance to seniors in the form of seminars held at the county's senior citizen/community centers. The seminars are led by attorneys with Lone Star Legal Aid. Funds expired during FY05, and additional funds have been sought for FY06.

The Galveston County Sheriff's Office also assists seniors through staff involvement in several programs beneficial to seniors and their safety.

Issues surrounding maltreatment of the elderly could be improved by focusing on the following strategies:

- Expand legal assistance for elderly survivors
- Expand counseling/ social work services to assist elderly with accessing community services
- Increase outreach and education about resources to help potential victims and their families
- Educate adult children on aging

Identified Problem

Data Collection

5. Survivors of sexual assault

- 212 reports of sexual assault in Galveston County (TDPS, Crime in Texas Report)

Discussion

One in four women and one in 10 men will be sexually assaulted in her or his lifetime. One in three sexual assault victims is under the age of 12, and convicted rape and sexual assault offenders' report that two-thirds of their victims were under the age of 18. Among victims age 18-29, two thirds had a prior relationship with the rapist. In Texas, the number of rapes began a slow, steady incline in 2000 following a seven-year decline.

The Victim Assistance Program of the Galveston County Criminal District Attorney's Office provides information, outreach, assistance with court matters and details about the Crime Victims Compensation Program to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and other violent crimes. Services are provided specifically for rape victims by the Resource and Crisis Center and the University of Texas Medical Branch, but staffing issues and coordination between law enforcement and service providers are sometimes problematic.

Survivors of sexual assault could be better served if funding were available for the following:

- Expand sexual assault response teams in Galveston and surrounding counties
- Expand funding for dedicated victim liaisons in area police departments

Identified Problem

Data Collection

6. Survivors of other violent crimes

- Incidents involving family violence that were reported to Galveston County law enforcement agencies in 2010: **2,703**
- Number of murders in Texas, 2010: **1,392**
- Estimated number of aggravated assaults causing severe injury in Texas, 2010: **77,203** (DPS)

Discussion

Two hundred sixty-four individuals were arrested for violent crimes in Galveston County during 2010, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety. Victims of these violent crimes, if they survive, face a difficult road to recovery that is sometimes marred by insensitivity and/or a lack of sufficient services at all levels of the public and private sectors.

Family members face a difficult recovery as well. Death of a loved one by violence is painful, unexpected and often senseless. As in all types of crises, survivors experience their loss in a variety of ways, but violent death always produces deep and bitter grief. Nothing could ever prepare a survivor for the day they find out that their loved one has been murdered. Death of a young person is always a shock because young people are supposed to grow old. The murder of an elderly person is always a shock because older people should die of natural causes, not at the hands of a violent criminal. The cruelty of the act of murder compounds the sense of sorrow and loss for the survivor, and these feelings are exacerbated by the acute feelings of injustice, distrust and helplessness. Sadly Galveston County is not immune to the senseless taking of innocent lives seen across the country.

The Galveston County Sheriff’s Office and Commissioners Court adopted the Texas VINE Program (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) in 2004. The state-funded program provides information to victims about their offenders, including release dates, transfers to other facilities, and court dates. It is designed to give comfort and reassurance to victims and to prevent them from being victimized again. Additional publicity is needed, however, to ensure more victims take advantage of the free telephone service.

Services to help the survivors of sudden and violent acts could be improved if resources and funding were accessible for the following efforts:

- Expand bereavement therapy for family members
- Increase access to Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) in Galveston County
- Expand information and referral to help families cope with events following the sudden, violent death of a loved one
- Expand funding to provide crime victim liaisons in all area police departments

Law Enforcement Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Identified Problem

Data Collection

1. Drugs and related criminal activity

- Number of arrests for drug-related offenses in Texas, 2008: **274,145** (DPS)
- Arrests for the sale or manufacture of drugs in Texas, 2009: **16,598** (DPS)
- Arrests for possession of drugs in Texas, 2008: **129,192** (DPS)
- Percentage of felony cases filed in Galveston County courts that are drug-related: **25-30** (DA)
- Arrests in Texas for DUI/DWI, 2009: **96,350** (DPS)

Discussion

Galveston County is a gateway to the Houston metropolitan area for drug trafficking. The county's proximity to Houston ensures that the drug trade and associated crimes will continue to be a major concern and focal point for local law enforcement. This includes an overtaxed court system, where one-fourth of all cases filed are drug-related.

Research continues to show drug use is not significantly declining among the user populations. Cocaine, crack, methamphetamines, heroin, marijuana, prescription drugs and so-called designer drugs are readily available in every corner of the county. Large sections of the county remain rural in nature, providing seclusion for the harvesting of marijuana and the production of methamphetamines. School surveys of all youth population groups continue to show ready availability and experimentation with illegal drugs, despite constant anti-drug education by the school systems and collaborating agencies and service organizations.

Despite a loss of state funding for the Narcotics Task Force several years ago, the Galveston County Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Texas Department of Public Safety and other local agencies have continued to cooperate and share equipment and resources. This investment in narcotics interdiction pays dividends in many areas, including reducing violent offenses, thwarting gang activity, breaking auto theft rings, and reducing burglaries. In late 2009 a grant-funded Special Crimes Unit was formed within the Sheriff's Office, focusing on localized narcotics and vice issues. This short-term funding will hopefully produce significant results for the long-term. However, long-term solutions are still needed.

Meanwhile, alcohol continues to be the most readily available drug and remains a primary factor in vehicle accidents involving injuries in Galveston County. A state grant to help reduce DWI activity was rekindled in 2009, with positive results.

Law enforcement agencies throughout the county work closely with the Sheriff's Office and state and federal agencies to investigate and prosecute drug offenders. However, more coordination and communication are needed as other necessary programs, such as homeland security, stretch existing resources. Resource gaps exist not only in the availability of training dollars for law enforcement personnel, but in the provision of long-term solutions to battling narcotics and narcotics-related crimes. Shrinking criminal justice budgets also mean fewer officers are available to attend training and focus on such issues, which doubtless affects quality of life for all citizens of our community.

Efforts to combat the illegal drug trade and associated criminal activities in Galveston County could be improved in the following manner:

- Increase training dollars to expand the county's capacity to investigate and prosecute drug offenders
- Improve coordination between law enforcement agencies, especially in the area of training to maximize available dollars
- Ensure continued and enhanced federal and state funding of localized and regional anti-drug programs
- Initiate and support programs designed to deal with manufacture, distribution, possession, and use of methamphetamines, including programs that focus on criminal enterprise receiving financial benefit from drug-related offenses

Identified Problem

Data Collection

2. Violent offenders

- Juvenile arrests in Texas for murder, 2009: **55**
- Adult arrests in Texas for murder, 2009: **782**
- Arrests in Texas for rape, 2009: **2025**
- Arrests for aggravated assaults in Texas, 2009: **24,247**
- Number of juveniles referred to the Galveston County Juvenile Justice Department for felony offenses, 2010: **254**

Discussion

Serious violent crimes – including homicide, rape, robbery and assault, as well as the rapidly growing crimes of violence utilizing the Internet – continue to represent blight on our communities as readily evident by daily news headlines.

Experts empanelled by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, point to three emerging trends in America: more youths are involved in violent acts; more violence is directed at families and co-workers; and violent acts are becoming more severe (e.g., a pregnant woman is murdered so that her full-term baby can be taken.)

Among juveniles, the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that aggravated assaults

comprise seven of 10 arrests for violent crime. Among adults, more than half of the increase in the prison population since 1995 is due to an increase in the number of prisoners convicted of violent offenses. Compounding the problem is the fact that many felons who were juveniles when convicted are returning to their old neighborhoods to re-establish connections and control.

The Interstate 45 corridor between Houston and Galveston has been a frequent hunting ground for predators, which often have dumped their victims in wooded areas not far from the highway. Several suspected kidnap victims have never been found. Homicide cases such as that brought against eccentric millionaire Robert Durst in the shooting and dismemberment of his neighbor require enormous taxpayer resources and impose significant demands on every aspect of the criminal justice system.

Alarmingly, a recent local growth in gangs/criminal enterprises is beginning to have negative effects in our communities. While they may not show their “colors” of old, such groups too often become involved in narcotics crimes, property crimes, and other criminal activities that involve violence not only toward other gangs but innocents having no connection to their nefarious deeds.

The Sheriff’s Office has an excellent working relationship with law enforcement agencies countywide. This relationship coupled with advances in records-management and data-sharing technology at the county is expected to improve interdepartmental communication significantly. The Sheriff’s Office and municipal departments also are working to forge new ties with citizens through various police and sheriff academies. These community information-sharing meetings are designed to foster trust and understanding that can translate into long-term public safety benefits.

Studies have shown economic depravity, family violence and substance abuse to be catalysts for violence. Studies also have shown that incarceration rarely eliminates violent behavior.

Efforts to reduce violent crime in Galveston County can be improved if resources become available for the following:

- Initiate and reinforce locally-based programs, including education and direct support to enforcement and investigative efforts, focused toward computer-facilitated crimes of all types (particularly those targeting children and the elderly);
- Initiate and support programs designed to focus on activities that provide financial support to criminal enterprise of all types;
- Expand opportunities to bring traditional law enforcement into the schools;
- Expand peer and family counseling opportunities for at-risk youths;
- Expand post-confinement support services to reduce recidivism and escalation of crimes, including programs of adult education designed to help move individuals from poverty and lives involving criminal activity;
- Continue funding to fast-track juveniles through the Criminal District Attorney’s Office and other elements of the juvenile and criminal justice systems;
- Continue funding for regional task forces aimed at apprehending violent offenders;

- Initiate new and capitalize on existing programs designed to provide training, investigative resources, and manpower to law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel designed to closely focus not only on violent crimes but precursor crimes leading to violence.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

3. Communication interoperability (information exchange pathways and methodologies)

- Of the county’s 13 incorporated cities and nine school districts, number of agencies using shared computer data bases: **3**
- Number of law enforcement agencies in the county capable of seamlessly transmitting data and graphic files to the Criminal District Attorney’s Office: **3**
- Number of law enforcement agencies in the county that can electronically receive warrant and arrest data from the Sheriff’s Office while in their patrol vehicles: **6**

Discussion

Interoperable communications, or communication between diverse agencies charged with maintaining public safety and providing emergency services, is a critical focal point of service delivery. Broadly publicized issues brought about as a result of the 9/11 disasters clearly indicate critical and potentially dangerous breakdowns in both communication pathways and methodologies chosen to exchange information.

Beyond the evident potential terrorist targets within Galveston County, there is a distinct need to establish new and reinforce current efforts to develop linked communications systems, enabling ready exchange of information between the dozens of law enforcement and public safety agencies within Galveston County. Such efforts, in addition to a focus toward homeland security, will provide for instantaneous exchange of information involving criminal activities and events that affect the safety and well-being of citizens and visitors. Any efforts in this light will include the “hardware” – devices of all types that support information exchange – and the “software” – concepts, ideas, protocols, and education – that bolster efforts to keep the public safe from threats.

The Law Enforcement Issues group believes the term “interoperable communications” requires a second definition, which highlights a second service gap.

The “languages” spoken by the community and public safety are often so arcane and obscure that neither has a true understanding of the other’s message, much less what the other truly needs. Efforts to bridge this communications gap have yielded individualized successes, but don’t often result in long-term relationships designed to solve long term problems.

Thus, the additional definition of “interoperable communications” includes developing

channels, messages, and methods of communicating between law enforcement and the public that provide meaning and utility to both stakeholder groups.

Adapting the “hardware” described previously, this secondary definition encompasses the hardware of devices and systems (of all types) geared to create and enhance both asynchronous and real-time communications between public safety and the community as a whole. The “software” concept, also mentioned earlier, fits this second definition in a more complex fashion, involving education of both groups in each other’s “language” so that the intention and relevance of one’s message is completely relayed and fully understood.

Interoperable communications can be achieved if the following gaps are addressed:

- More funds are needed to support existing and create new efforts toward enabling interagency and intra-agency communications. Not only is this geared toward hardware and software, this should also point toward educating public safety and government officials on the critical importance of information-sharing.
- Funding is needed for programs involving law enforcement agencies, groups focused toward handling quality-of-life matters within the community, and the public as a whole. These funds could be used for training law enforcement and key community groups in community-oriented, intelligence-led, and problem-oriented policing methods; supporting law enforcement overtime programs designed to enhance community interaction and support; and furthering development of channels, messages, and methodologies of communications targeting information interchange between all stakeholders.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

4. Training and Equipment

Number of full-time sworn officers in Galveston County = 811 (Texas Department of Public Safety)

Discussion

State mandated training continues; however, the mandate is no longer funded by the State. The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training sets minimum basic training, enrollment, licensure, and proficiency standards for peace officers, jailers, and telecommunicators. Local law enforcement agencies have very limited training budgets. Currently, TCLEOSE mandates 40 hours of continuing education for each officer, every two years, but with no funding available, some agencies will be stressed to provide the basic training classes to their officers. Police officers should consistently sharpen their skills and learn new strategies to combat crime. Training courses that teach communications skills including report writing, verbal tactics, crisis intervention techniques and courtroom testimony are skills needed by officers in a majority of daily situations, yet very little quality, cost-effective training exists. Another topic includes tactical training for patrol officers, such as active shooter intervention, tactics for

off-duty officers, combat casualty care for first responders, and low light shooting skills. The skill set is imperative to prepare officers to fulfill their role in homeland security as first responders.

There is a growing need for not only new equipment but also for the replacement of old outdated and worn out equipment. New technologies available to law enforcement to better their service delivery are needed throughout the law enforcement community.

Commonly identified equipment needs include: body armor, laptop/mobile computers, radar units, portable breath test equipment, surveillance equipment, forensic equipment, training aids, radio/communications equipment, photography equipment, standard patrol equipment and specialized SWAT, negotiations equipment. Some of the major barriers to obtaining law enforcement equipment include financial and budget constraints, lack of trained personnel, limited manpower impeding the ability to acquire new technology and lack of available training.

Law enforcement training and equipment needs can be achieved if the following gaps are addressed:

- Funding for in-service courses
- Support specialized training in a variety of communications skills and tactical skills
- Funding for law enforcement technology and specialized equipment purchases

Behavioral Health Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Identified Problem

1. Juvenile Mental Health

Limited access and high costs of counseling and therapy decrease the ability for families to get help for a child who may be in crisis.

Most families are not aware that an evaluation maybe needed until crisis. Diagnostic services are limited and a need for the county. Education for families who are managing mental a health disorder in children need the tools and resources to maneuver an often confusing mental health system.

Many children depend on mental health services to help them function in school, in their family, and among peers in the community. Youth who do not receive essential medication and accompanying cognitive-behavioral therapy frequently find themselves expelled from school, delinquent in the community, or runaways. The suicide rate among children is a major cause of death. Approximately half of youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental disorder (Juvenile Probation Commission, 2003).

Teen Health has limited mental health services offered to mainland residents only providing services one day a week in La Marque-leaving an

Data Collection

MHMR (Mental Health Mental Retardation) Gulf Coast Center:

- 480 unduplicated children were provided mental health mental retardation service through local MHMR authority.
- 72 children received crisis services.
- 1350 children attended doctor visits.
- 1174 families of children received routine case management.
- 262 families of children received intensive case management.
- 1476 families of children received skills training
- 135 families participated in the “Family Partner” program.
- 421 children received therapy/counseling.
- 38 families of children received respite.
- 153 families of children received medical training & support.
- 93 parents received parent training
- The percentage of students reporting having been physically hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend, forced to have sexual intercourse, carried a weapon on school property, been in a school fight, drove while drinking, or considered suicide all increased during 2009 over the previous report from 2008 or 2007. (City of Galveston, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007, 2008, 2009). Of the reporting independent school districts in Galveston County, depression in youth is identified as the top mental health need.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24 (Centers for Disease Control)

unknown number with minimal access to services. Second tier needs identified include anxiety disorders and family counseling

Discussion

In the general population of Texas in 2003, the Mental Health Association estimated that there were 151,464 children in the state who had a significant impairment due to mental illness, but only 39,598 (26%) received any services. In Galveston County, the same report found that of 1,688 youth in need, only 181 (11%) received services. While these data do not speak directly to youth in the juvenile justice system, there is reason to suppose that a disproportionate number of youth with mental illness do come in contact with the police and courts. If youth with mental illnesses were identified early and appropriate mental health services provided, some youth would not advance further in the juvenile, and later, adult justice systems.

There has **been** considerable attention given to the mental health needs of juveniles in the justice system. A recent article in the *Houston Chronicle* (11-28-2009) reports that an increasing number of youths appear to be in trouble with the law because of their underlying mental health needs. In 2008, 32% of juveniles in the juvenile probation pipeline had diagnosable mental health needs, and about 60% of youth in Texas Youth Commission facilities have mental health diagnoses, suggesting that there is a correlation between mental health needs and seriousness of offenses. In 2001, the Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council estimated that 22.4% of Texas youth under the supervision of a juvenile probation agency had identifiable mental health needs, so the numbers appear to be rising. This scenario is generating interest in collaborative efforts with mental health providers.

Many children depend on mental health services to help them function in school, in their family, and among peers in the community. Youth who do not receive essential medication and accompanying cognitive-behavioral therapy frequently find themselves expelled from school, delinquent in the community, or runaways. The suicide rate among children is a major cause of death. Approximately half of youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental disorder (Juvenile Probation Commission, 2003).

Understanding the link between the prevalence of mental health issues in school-aged children and in the juvenile justice population demonstrates the need for family-based prevention initiatives which have a dual benefit to the society and to the individual.

Hurricane Ike was the third most destructive hurricane to ever make landfall in the United States. FEMA had over 25,000 eligible applicants for assistance in Galveston County (FEMA). Galveston County has made huge strides in recovering from Hurricane Ike. However, many people still have mental health issues that have occurred or worsened in reaction to the destruction and displacement caused by Ike.

As may have been predicted, the climate of the Ike affected communities was surreal. Police blocked streets and the Galveston causeway. Many people were unable to return to begin the lengthy rebuilding process and many people who were depending on mental health and medical services to assist with pre-existing conditions went without service. The focus was on rebuilding structures and road, installing power lines. It was not until mid-year 2009 that the true psychological impact of Ike was clearly seen. Disaster mental health research indicates that the stress and uncertainty caused by a disaster increases risk for post traumatic stress disorder, depression, and family conflict. Children are especially sensitive to post-disaster distress and family conflict (Research Education Disaster Mental Health). The Galveston County community continues to work together and agencies such as St. Vincent's House, The Jesse Tree, The Children's Center, Holistic Community Development Center and others work on-site with Disaster Housing Assistance Program participants in order to continue helping Ike survivors meet their needs. For example, starting in March 2009, Family Service Center through a contract with the Disaster Housing Assistance Program has provided on-site crisis intervention and individual and family counseling.

In summary, there are various mental health resources in the county but they are limited, specialized, and usually not aimed at pre-delinquent children or first-time offenders. Efforts and funding are needed to accomplish the following:

- More collaboration between mental illness service providers, schools, and law enforcement
- More individual, group, and family mental health outpatient services for youths
- Substantially more public education about mental illness and its treatment, especially as it relates to youths
- More outpatient treatment options available to the court system for youthful offenders who are exhibiting mental illnesses, can be safely maintained in the community, and who may not benefit from confinement in a detention facility
- Community-based group programs that teach essential behavioral skills
- Innovative interventions, such as building partnerships between police officers and mental health professionals
- Programs to insure that children with mental illness are appropriately diverted to treatment settings and away from an overcrowded detention system
- Outpatient counseling for adjudicated youth charged with sexual crimes, and for children ages 12 and under who have been chronically acting out sexually

Identified Problem

Data Collection

2. Youth in Detention or on Probation

Mental Health needs identified among formal referrals to the local Juvenile Justice Department. The data Collection is based upon MAYSI-2 scores, within the Warning category, between 1-1-09 to 10-31-09.

- Juveniles identified with high anger issues – 63
- Juveniles identified with serious alcohol/drug abuse issues - 30
- Juveniles identified with depression/anxiety issues - 23
- Juveniles identified with suicidal ideation - 53
- Juveniles identified with thought disturbances - 49

Discussion

There is substantial evidence that a high percentage of youth who are being held in county detention facilities and who are in the county's juvenile probation system have unmet mental health needs. In a 2006 report, the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice reported that 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system suffer from mental disorders, and 20% with disorders so severe that their daily functioning is substantially impaired. In Texas, the Criminal Justice Policy Council estimated that 22.4% of youth who are under supervision of the juvenile courts have identifiable mental health needs (2001).

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health estimates that 1 in 5 youth in the Texas juvenile justice system has serious mental health problems. Most of these youth who are on probation have committed relatively minor crimes, but their mental health problems may still be major.

In 2001, the Texas Legislature mandated the use of the MAYSI-2, a mental health screening tool. They have found that about 1/3 of those screened with the MAYSI-2 score high enough to be flagged as a precautionary measure. They also found a positive relationship between the seriousness of the crime and MAYSI-2 score, suggesting that better mental health might correlate with less severe youth crimes.

For many of these youth, the juvenile justice system represents a last hope for help, as their illnesses include major depression, bipolar disorder, conduct disorder, and other disabling conditions. In Galveston County, the Juvenile Justice Board provides mental health services to youth through a contract with Family Service Center for serving youth on probation and in secure custody. While this is very helpful, youth should not have to enter the juvenile justice system to receive mental health services; and whenever possible, youth should be diverted to alternative mental health resources. Regardless, whether sentenced to detention or probation,

or diverted to community services, contact with the police, courts, and juvenile authorities presents an important opportunity for youth and their families to receive the help that is so needed. To be successful, there must be a close partnership among community agencies, the police, and the courts.

On a national level, one in five children has a diagnosable mental, emotional or behavioral disorder; and up to one in 10 may suffer from a serious emotional disturbance. Seventy percent of children, however, do not receive mental health services (SGRMH, 1999). As many as one in every 33 children and one in eight adolescents may have depression (CMHS, 1998); and once a child experiences an episode of depression, he or she is at risk of having another episode within the next five years (CMHS, 1998). Teenage girls are more likely to develop depression than teenage boys (NIMH, 2000); and both children and teens who have some chronic illness are at increased risk for depression. Today, suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth in the 15 to 24 year old range; and is the 6th leading cause for younger children, ages 5 to 14. These statistics are even more disconcerting when one realizes that there are proven, short-term, effective treatments for most depressions, if treatment is only made available.

Youth with serious mental health problems are often first identified in the juvenile justice and the children's protective services systems. These are key points at which mental health services should be made available. In addition, diagnostic and early intervention services should focus on school systems. In Galveston Independent School District and in the Galveston County Juvenile Detention facility, the University Of Texas Department Of Psychiatry is initiating a "tele-psychiatry" program that promises to reach youth that would otherwise not be served. They believe that this model may be extended to other ISDs in the future. Such efforts are to be applauded and encouraged. Their ultimate success, however, may depend on the availability of follow-up treatment following diagnostic assessment. Presently the clinical mental health resources in Galveston County for children are very limited with the UTMB's four (4) beds for children, the Gulf Coast Center's Children's Services in League City, Family Service Center of Galveston County with locations on the Island and in Texas City, Devereaux Hospital in League City, and various private practitioners. As previously noted, Galveston County does fund FSCG to locate two mental health clinicians in their Juvenile Detention Center, and a ½-time clinician to work with youth on probation on the Island. These resources provide a core of expertise upon which to build.

While Galveston Alternative School is not a mental health program, they accept youth with serious personal, social, and mental health needs. In the context of a residential school program, they provide youth with an environment in which they can thrive, discipline with nurturing, and referral to mental health outpatient services when needed.

In general, the following efforts should receive support:

- Collaboration – Efforts to improve the collaboration and services integration among public and private providers of mental health services;

- Identification – Efforts for improved and systematic ways to identify youth in need of mental health services, such as the tele-psychiatry initiative at Ball High;
- Diversion – Efforts to divert youth with mental health needs to appropriate treatment services in the community;
- Treatment – Efforts to provide needed mental health services to youth and their families within the juvenile justice system.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

3. Adult Mental Health

Gulf Coast Center/MHMR (Mental Health Mental Retardation) Crisis Service's Detail

Almost no therapy/counseling in the Hwy 6 area and certainly no psychiatric services. A fair number of kids in the schools in that area where there is almost no referral source there for counseling. If folks in that area need help they have to go north or south to get it. With no money/insurance your chances of help are very small.

Crisis services are the only services Galveston county residents have. Crisis oriented services versus prevention services are a huge concern when healthy community approaches are proven to reduce the number of catastrophic incidences.

People experiencing mental health issues who reach out for help are directed to an up to 2 year waiting list. While waiting the possibility of crisis, hospitalization, jail, homelessness, etc. become a reality. Local MHMR authority continues to serve

- 34 individuals received crisis ACT out/home respite services.
- 1132 individuals received crisis follow-up/prevention.
- 130 individuals received crisis follow-up/prevention for 2nd time.
- 1215 Crisis Hotline calls were received.
- 40 CRISIS incident clients received pharmacy management.
- 888 individuals received crisis out/home respite.
- Averages of 168 people at any given month are waiting for mental health services for Galveston and Brazoria counties.

NAMI GC (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

- 58 unduplicated consumers attended support meetings once a week.
- 324 families and consumers were provided with information, referrals and local resources.
- 210 families and consumers received emergency financial assistance.
- 457 families, professionals and consumers were provided local mental health resource manuals as a tool to maneuver through a complicated mental health system.
- 114 unduplicated families received support through organized support meetings.
- 64 families and consumer received local intense service advocacy, as a means to maneuver a

almost double the clients than the number of clients state funding is provided for. State funding is stretched to maximum capacity and local resources are limited. This places an additional burden on local mental health/recovery non-profit agencies.

Consumers (people affected by mental illness) are in need and interested in support groups but face many challenges when it come to transportation and location of services.

Families and consumers need guidance when maneuvering through a complicated mental health system.

Families from all socio economic levels need education and support so they can learn how to navigate the county mental health system when trying to get their family member care and services.

Many homeless clients have untreated mental illness. That has rapidly become a law enforcement issue. As Galveston moves forward in its bid to become a tourist destination, the pressure for local law enforcement to cope with disruptive homeless or mentally ill clients has increased.

Finding a method of abating this particular problem would

complicated local mental health system.

St Vincent's House

- St. Vincent's House, remains a provider of choice for those uninsured or indigent patients in Post-Hurricane Ike Galveston. UTMB will not return to full capacity in the foreseeable future with this department.
- The Mental Health Clinic at St. Vincent's continues to operate well-over capacity. It has expanded its ability see patients by seeing between 30 -36 patients every other Thursday as opposed to its limit of 30. Unfortunately the number of those who are unseen and need help hovers in the 40+ range. The gap in service remains with approximately 800 patients seen and the demand hovering in the 1,080+ range.
- Pharmaceuticals are a continuing pressing problem. Manufacturers would give UTMB samples and those would be forwarded to us. Those relationships were disrupted after Ike. We retain a voucher program for the few psychiatric maintenance medications that are only \$4 at Target and Wal-Mart. But an entire range of medications are currently out of reach due to budgetary restrictions, despite our obtaining several grants.
- Additionally St. Vincent's House is seeing a greater than usual rise in those needing homeless vouchers. Our homeless clients have risen dramatically. We had 3,445 homeless in 2010. In 2005 we only had 1,646.
- Filling our new County Jail with the mentally ill is frequently the decision of last resort for law enforcement officers who are charged with the primary duty of ensuring public safety. Not only is "warehousing" mentally ill citizens in jails an inadequate solution in terms of short and long term treatment, it is extremely costly. Moreover it utilized valuable jail space better suited for criminals.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 25-34 year olds.(Center for Disease Control)
- Galveston and Brazoria Counties share 18 in-patient psychiatry beds located at St. Joseph's

fill a much needed gap in service in Galveston County.

Suicide prevention education through the state is a system or concept of volunteer organizations and individuals. With little to no funds that trickle down to counties suicide prevention education training available is little to none.

Inpatient psychiatric beds remain a need for Galveston county. In many instances, beds are limited and scarce with mental health deputies calling area hospitals to find an open bed for people who are a danger to themselves or others. Those people looking for inpatient psychiatric treatment do not have many options until they become a danger to self or others.

There is a need for funding to expand wraparound services to this highly motivated population to reduce recidivism and alter the trajectory of families destined for criminal justice involvement.

Community based sentencing is proven far more effective and cheaper than jails.

Veteran access to mental health programs and benefits are often complicated and overwhelming to those in the most serious need. Additional Veteran programs need to be available and more

Hospital in Houston. Down from 20 beds in 2010.

- In FY 2009 TDCJ released 936 ex-offenders to Galveston County, or an average of 78 persons per month.² Two-thirds of all persons incarcerated have mental health and/or substance abuse-related issues that often times go untreated. Offenders released on probation or parole who have a serious mental health illness (schizophrenia, schizo-affective disorder, bi-polar and major depressive disorder) receive a continuum of care upon release through TCOOMMI (Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments).
- In its first six months of seeing clients, the Galveston County Restorative Justice Community Partnership saw 68 ex-offenders seeking re-entry services, far below the actual need of the county. Approximately one-third of restorative justice clients had a serious mental health condition of either PTSD, Major Depression, or Bi-polar Disorder and were most likely to be homeless. The effectiveness of this program is limited by its current capacity to serve less than a tenth of the known returning offenders to Galveston County.

accessible. County collaborative Veteran's initiative do exist but are limited and some are time restricted grants.

Discussion

The 2010 census Galveston county population count was 291,302. That means that there are 72,825 people in Galveston County affected by mental illness (National NAMI: 1 in 4 people are affected by mental illness). There are two distinct types of mental illnesses. First, is serious to persistent mental illnesses which are caused by psychological, biological, genetic, or environmental conditions, and second, situational mental illnesses due to severe stress which may be only temporary. Serious mental illness consist of Depression, Bipolar disorder, Obsessive Compulsive disorder (OCD), Schizophrenia, Anxiety disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders, ADHD and more.

Anyone can have mental illness, regardless of age gender race or socioeconomic level. Many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time.

Nearly 45% of those with any mental disorder meet criteria for two or more disorders, with severity strongly related to co morbidity. Mental illness can and should be treated. Nearly two-thirds of all people with a diagnosable mental disorder do not seek treatment. That means 24,275 people in Galveston County may be seeking treatment within a year. With proper treatment, many people affected with mental illness can return to normal, productive lives.

Community based services designed to break longstanding behavioral patterns that result in criminal justice involvement are needed in the following areas:

- Re-entry Services: Individuals returning to Galveston County after incarceration recognize both direct service needs and capacity building service needs for self sufficient independent living in the County after a period of incarceration.
- Offenders who have a serious mental illness released with full-time served receive no mental health treatment. Both substance abuse treatment and mental health services are limited in Galveston County and target individuals only with long term compromise to their ability to function.
- Prevention and early intervention services are needed to re-direct the path of addiction and mental illness for a substantial portion of the population. When the severity and prevalence of substance abuse and mental illness is reduced collateral damage to co-existing vulnerable populations is diminished.
- Nonviolent offenders need to be assigned to community based programs instead of jail time which ultimately cost the county \$80 per day (Marketplace Morning Report, Tuesday, August 11, 2009) versus community programs that can run \$12 – \$13 per day (Health Management Associates, Impact of Proposed Budget Cuts to Community-Based Mental Health Service, March 2011) and with minimal reentry challenges to face upon release.

Fostering healthy community approaches seems to show the most success. With prevention, education and information families can look to healthy living styles. Without these elements the possibility of crisis only related services continues to be the norm for many.

Resources Available

Included below are resources identified by the Galveston County Community Planning Team that are available to provide services that could potentially help in closing criminal justice gaps:

Juvenile Justice:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Children's Protective Services	State government	Investigates child abuse and neglect
Family Service Center	Non-profit	Outpatient treatment of juvenile sex offenders (Oasis) Program
Galveston County Juvenile Justice Department	County government	Treatment, training and rehabilitation for young offenders ages 10-16
Galveston County Criminal District Attorney	County government	Prosecution of violent juvenile offenders
Galveston County Juvenile Referee	County government	Adjudication of troubled youths 10-16
Galveston Independent School District	School district	Operates truancy reduction program
JP, County and District Courts	Local/state government	Disposition of cases regarding juveniles
Texas Youth Commission	State government	Confines juveniles in the state system for committing unlawful acts

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Galveston County Sheriff's Office	County government	Law enforcement for unincorporated county
Municipal police departments	City government	Law enforcement for incorporated cities
School district police departments	School districts	Law enforcement in the public school setting
Texas Department of Public Safety	State government	Traffic safety, drug and other investigations

Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas	Non-profit	AIDS awareness, prevention and treatment
Alcohol-Drug Abuse Women's Center	Non-profit	Residential program for women with substance abuse problems
Alcoholics Anonymous	Non-profit	Regular meetings for participants confronting alcohol problems
Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol	Non-profit	Primary provider of education and services for drug- and alcohol-dependent youth and adults
Bay Area Recovery Center	Non-profit	Treatment facility
Beacon House	Non-profit	Treatment facility
Devereaux Hospital	Non-profit	Treatment facility
DePelchin Children's Center	Non-profit	Treatment facility
Family Service Center	Non-profit	Outpatient treatment facility for youth and families
Galveston County Health District	Special District	Health services for indigent; health and safety for community at large
Gulf Coast Alliance for the Mentally Ill	Non-profit association	Advocates for mentally ill
The Gulf Coast Center	State government	Primary state provider of mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, and prevention
Mainland Medical Center	For-profit corporation	Medical care, wellness activities, partnerships for prenatal care and social services screening
Mothers Against Drunk Driving Gulf Area	Non-profit	Advocate for alcohol-free highways
New Horizons Treatment Center	Non-profit	Treatment facility
Pathway to Recovery	Non-profit	Treatment facility
Phoenix House	Non-profit	Treatment facility
Recovery Campus of Texas	Non-profit	Treatment facility
School-based health clinics (Galveston, Texas City, La Marque)	School district/non-profit partnership	Free and reduced-price primary health care for students and school district employees
TexCare Community-Based Program	Non-profit	Coordination and education regarding children's health insurance coverage through CHIP and Children's Medicaid
University of Texas Medical Branch	State government	Primary, secondary, tertiary care multi-county region

Prevention/Intervention:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Advocacy Center for Children	Non-profit	Multitude of services for victims of child abuse and neglect, and their families
American Red Cross	Non-profit	Emergency assistance to individuals and families
Bay Area Alliance for Youth and Families	Non-profit	Services for youths and families
Bay Area Turning Point	Non-profit	Shelter for families in need; community education about crime prevention
Beacon Place	Non-profit	Transitional housing for women/ children victims of domestic violence
Big Brothers-Big Sisters	Non-profit	One- to-one mentoring program that matches caring adults with at-risk children between the ages of 6-17. Program includes community-based and school-based mentoring.
Boys and Girls Club of Galveston County	Non-profit	Education, leadership training and character-building for young people; after-school programs
Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts	Non-profit	Education, leadership training and character-building for young people; after-school programs/day care
Champions of Children	Non-profit	Advocate for government/community/non-profit alliances to better serve children and families
City of Galveston Families, Children and Youth Board	Non-profit association	Collaboration of non-profits and citizens focusing on children, youths and families
Community Resource Coordination Group for Children and Youth	Non-profit/government/ community collaboration	Case review team for children and youth of Galveston County in need of input/ resources from multiple entities
Community Youth Development Program	Community-based organization	Academic support, summer job-shadowing, mentoring, recreation, substance abuse prevention and youth leadership development
Connect Transportation	State government	Variable route transportation provider for mainland Galveston County

The Children’s Center, Inc.	Non-profit	Provider of multiple services for children, youth, families, the homeless
Communities in Schools (GISD, DISD, CCISD, and TCISD)	Non-profit	Provider of counseling, crisis intervention, academic support, tutoring, mentoring, teen pregnancy prevention, gang prevention and intervention in area schools. Improves student outcomes
Community Assessment Program	Non-profit (Jesse Tree)	Tracks users of social services; connects families to medical home
Early Childhood Coalition of Galveston County	Non-profit association	Advocate for services for young children and provider of community education on children and families
Family Service Center of Galveston County	Non-profit	Counseling, support services for youths, families
Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health	Non-profit association	Mental health counseling and support
Friendswood Police Department Victim Assistance Program	City government	Comprehensive services for crime victims and their families
Galveston Boys Rites of Passage	Non-profit	Education, leadership, training mentoring and character-building for young people
Galveston County Parks and Senior Services	County government	Recreational opportunities for all age groups
Galveston Family Shelter and Transitional Living Center	Non-profit	Emergency shelter/ transitional living for various age groups
Galveston County Social Services	County government	Emergency assistance for needy (rent, utility bills, medical bills)
Galveston County TRIAD	Non-profit association	Advocates for protection of elderly
Galveston Partnership for Better Living	Non-profit	Dedicated to improved outcomes for youth and families; focus on Galveston Island quality of life
Gulf Coast NAMI	Non-profit	Counseling & other services for mentally ill and their families
H.I.S. Ministries	Non-profit	Faith-based emergency assistance provider on mainland
Immunization Coalition	Non-profit association	Working to boost immunization rates countywide
Indigent Health Care Task Force	Non-profit association	Seeking permanent funding solutions for health care for uninsured
Island Transit	City government	Federally funded public transportation for Galveston
Families Consortium	Non-profit association	Advocates for families

Innovative Alternatives	Non-profit	Counseling for youths and families
The Jesse Tree	Non-profit	Multiple emergency assistance, food and medical programs; faith-based link to network of providers
Lone Star Legal Aid	Non-profit	Legal services for indigent
Mainland Children's Partnership	Non-profit	Intensive case management, counseling and education for families with young children
Meals on Wheels	County government	Hot meals delivered to senior citizens
Metro Counseling Associates	For profit	In home & school counseling
Nia Cultural Center-Girls Rites of Passage	Non-profit	Education, leadership training and character-building for young people
Our Daily Bread	Non-profit	Soup kitchen for homeless
Resource and Crisis Center	Non-profit	Multiple services for women, men and children related to domestic violence, abuse and neglect
St. Vincent's House	Non-profit	Medical, social and educational services for large north-of-Broadway Ave. (Galveston) neighborhood
Salvation Army	Non-profit	Emergency assistance, temporary housing, spiritual guidance
Save Our Hood	Non-profit	Neighborhood revitalization
Texas Department of Human Services	State government	First stop in obtaining tax-funded public assistance
Texas Rehabilitation Commission	State government	Rehabilitation and vocational assistance for disabled
The Work Source-Galveston, Texas City	State government	Comprehensive services for unemployed, underemployed and benefit-dependent
United Way-Island, Mainland	Non-profit	Primary source of funding for many social services agencies

Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Galveston County Community Planning Team works in conjunction with other planning groups in the county to ensure a regular exchange of ideas. Individuals active in the planning process generally serve on many of these committees and share mutual concerns.

The Galveston County Community Planning Team strives to meet periodically to review the plan and make necessary additions and deletions. At least one formal meeting of the entire group is held each fall, but agency and community representatives typically submit suggestions and changes via telephone and e-mail throughout the year to the Community Planning Coordinator.

Drafts and annual updates of the Community Plan are circulated by e-mail with requests for comments, changes, etc. Wherever possible e-mail is used to reduce the need for meetings, printing, postage, etc.

It is the intent of the Community Planning Group to improve outcomes for Galveston County families struggling with problems described in the plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Galveston County agencies and organizations to address problems with local funds as well as grant funds from multiple state and federal sources. To the extent that these funds are available, the Community Planning Team will continue to urge agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

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This Plan is available on-line at www.co.galveston.tx.us. Click on Public Information Office on the left side of the page, and then follow the links to “Download the Community Plan.”

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