

Collaboration: The initial task assigned to Yamhill County under the Evidence-Based Decision Making Initiative (EBDMI) was the identification of our Policy Team members. Yamhill County has the luxury of a tradition of collaboration among local criminal justice partners. Historically, the division executives and managers of the Yamhill County Courts, District Attorney, Sheriff, Community Corrections, Juvenile, Health and Humans Services (HHS), and the Department of Human Services (DHS) have met on a weekly basis to collaborate about current practices, problems and possible system improvements. This team was originally formed with the purpose of working together to achieve common goals that each agency recognized they could not accomplish without the participation and efforts of the others. In this manner, Yamhill County already possessed the added benefit of this group's existence and collaboration. The partnerships already developed through these weekly meetings provided a forum of enthusiastic participants from which to initially seek EBDMI membership.

Initially, our Policy Team consisted of County Commissioner Mary Stern, Presiding Circuit Court Judge John Collins, Yamhill County Sheriff Jack Crabtree, Yamhill County District Attorney Brad Berry, Health Department Director Silas Halloran-Steiner, and Community Corrections Director Ted Smietana (Local Coordinator). Shortly after being notified that Yamhill County was selected as one of the seven seed sites nationally, NIC suggested that we may wish to consider expanding our Policy Team to include a representative from the local defense bar, and a local Police Chief. The Policy Team approached both McMinnville Police Chief Ron Noble and defense attorney Carol Fredrick about participation in the Initiative and they both accepted. During the Phase II Kickoff Workshop in Bethesda, Maryland in October of 2010, NIC further advised the Policy Team to add a victim advocate to the membership, and we agreed. Thereafter, the Policy Team gained the additional participation of the District Attorney's

Victim Services Director, Debra Bridges. The Policy Team later came to the conclusion to invite Chief Brian Casey of Newberg Police Department.

Once team membership was finalized, the Policy Team set about the task of creating a Charter, which included the vision, mission, and values specific to both this group and Yamhill County. Activities and guidelines as well as assigned roles and responsibilities were also clearly outlined in the document. “The Team envisions a safer Yamhill County community where professionals work together, utilizing data, research and evidence-based practices in the criminal justice system. Yamhill County will experience enhanced public safety, a reduction in the number of victims, greater offender accountability and a reduced threat of harm through appropriate application of proven practices at all phases of the criminal justice process. Our mission is to collaboratively develop a strategic plan to implement proven, cost-effective system improvements.” Via the creation of this document, each team member committed to attending Policy Team meetings twice monthly as well as additional meetings required to accomplish specified work tasks.

This ten-member team has functioned as our Policy Team throughout the duration of Phase II. In this application, letters of interest have been included from all of the Policy Team members listed above, with the exception of Chiefs Noble and Casey. Four workgroups were initially created to focus on key decision points: Arrest, Pre-trial, Sentencing, and Programming. The Arrest workgroup was formed specifically to focus on law enforcement matters and consisted of the two Police Chiefs, the Sheriff and other members. Originally, the group intended to continue work previously highlighted by the Special Needs Task Force on ways in which to better manage and address special needs populations in the community, thereby, attempting to prevent use of criminal justice system resources for special needs. This group was

challenged to explore other possible areas of their discipline in which evidence-based practices could be implemented for system improvements. The workgroup initially considered the application of a static assessment tool which officers could utilize to assist with discretion in determination of arrest versus citation upon criminal offense. After several meetings and discussion within the workgroup and Policy Team, the Police Chiefs and Sheriff determined that they were unwilling to focus on the implementation of an assessment tool to assist with arrest decisions. They cited the lack of empirical evidence and data to support this idea as well as unwillingness to base officers' discretion solely on an assessment tool, even though it was stressed that assessment information should be used only to augment their decision making ability.

Ultimately, the goal of this workgroup reverted back to the original concept to focus on resource formation and expansion for special needs populations. However, by this point, the Police Chiefs' personal involvement and interest in EBDMI appeared to have diminished. The Sheriff and other members of the workgroup have continued to work toward established harm reduction goals for the special needs population. Although the two chiefs remain supportive of the Initiative, they are not currently participating or attending meetings on a regular basis because they do not feel that the Initiative directly relates to their scope of work. They have currently declined to submit their own letters of support. It is hoped that, should Yamhill County be selected for Phase III of EBDMI, the interest of the two Police Chiefs' personal involvement in the Initiative will be sparked once again.

Understanding and support of EBDMI has continued to expand county-wide and line staff has generally been very involved in the process. On 04/22/11, Judge Roger Warren, President of the National Center for State Courts, and Mark Carey, of The Carey Group,

provided an excellently received training on evidence-based practices. All Yamhill County criminal justice agencies, stakeholders, and their staff were invited to attend and included representatives from Community Corrections, the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the Jail, Health and Human Services mental health and chemical dependency, including all four judges, defense attorneys, local police departments, and the Board of Commissioners. External guests included a Washington County Judge, the Oregon Department of Corrections Community Corrections Chief, managers from other community corrections agencies, a representative from SAMSHA as well as other consultants. The training provided some attendees with their first exposure to and basic understanding of evidence-based practices. Some excellent discussions about what, where and how evidence-based changes could be implemented in the Yamhill County system ensued.

Our technical assistant helped us to utilize this training opportunity further to determine the general level of evidence-based knowledge held by the Yamhill County workforce through submission of a questionnaire to our attendees. The results indicated that the training was very effective in expanding general knowledge of both evidence-based practices and the Initiative and assisted to continually build upon already existing collaboration between agencies. Throughout Phase II of EBDMI, the National Institution of Corrections (NIC) offered webinar trainings on various aspects of the strategic planning process. These webinars were also offered to the membership and their staff to continue education and support of evidence-based practices.

In addition to the training, we have continued to involve our staff in the various EBDMI activities and efforts of the four workgroups formed to create our implementation plan. Membership of the pre-trial workgroup included the Presiding Judge, pre-trial release officer, jail captain, deputy district attorney, defense attorney, a mental health caseworker, and community

corrections director. The sentencing workgroup included the Presiding Judge, the district attorney and a deputy district attorney, a defense attorney, the victim's service director, a mental health caseworker, and community corrections director. The programming workgroup included the director of Health and Human Services, five mental health and chemical dependency staff, three probation officers, a jail sergeant and the community corrections manager. Finally, the special needs workgroup included the Sheriff, a county commissioner, two chiefs of police, a patrol sergeant and captain, the health and human services director, and the community corrections manager.

These workgroup participants were carefully selected because of their particular role in the local system, work experience or expertise in their field of work. Executives, managers and line staff were included in these workgroups so every perspective on a particular issue could be considered. Members' participation in Policy Team Meetings and workgroups has varied based on their areas of interest, availability, and level of commitment over time. Workgroups met over several months, sometimes more than once per week, requiring a very significant commitment by the participants. They should be commended overall for their involvement and helpful input.

Due to the extensive effort and time involved in Phase II, we know with certainty that the Policy team and workgroup members are committed to this Initiative. We do not expect any significant change in collaboration during Phase III. It is anticipated that interest and energy during Phase III will be reinforced as the actual strategic plans we so carefully created will be implemented into the system, thereby, materializing as the fruits of our labor. Should Yamhill County not be selected for Phase III, the Policy Team ) remains committed to implementation of our plan. Commitment to the improvements described in our Implementation Plan is now intrinsic.