

ISSUE BRIEF VOL. 2 DECEMBER 2018:

ORGANIZING FOR MENTAL HEALTH & YOUTH SUPPORT IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

ILLINOIS LEADERS TAKE ON MENTAL HEALTH REFORM AND CRISIS INTERVENTION

Metro IAF Chicago metropolitan area leaders are working hard to end the jailing of people with mental illness. In Illinois, roughly 27% of inmates are receiving ongoing mental health services, and about half are in need of substance abuse treatment. DuPage United, Fox River Valley Initiative, Lake County United, and United Power for Action and Justice (Cook County) are organizing religious leaders, judges, law enforcement, corrections officials, prosecutors, mental health workers, and families of those who are incarcerated to address the scandalously high rates of people with mental illness who are in prisons and jails in Illinois. Aligning allies and continuing to put local pressure on key elected officials to make this a priority has produced concrete results.

Strategy:

- Increase Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for Police to deescalate situations involving the mentally ill,
- Establish Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU) as alternatives to jails and emergency departments so that mentally ill people get treatment immediately and avoid arrest,
- Increase affordable housing access and wrap around services for people with mental illness.

Progress to date:

Kane, Lake and DuPage Counties established their own CIT training programs with a total of 1,101 law enforcement officers trained and 1,000 more to be trained by early 2020. Kane County established a jail re-entry program for ex-offenders with mental illness to access treatment and housing resources when released from jail. Kane county leaders also leveraged \$1 million to build a CSU in Presence Mercy Hospital in Aurora, IL.

As a result of Lake County United's (LCU) continued effort to establish relationships with power players who share an interest in diverting those with mental illness from jail, LCU organized to build the strong support necessary to win state approval of a 46-bed behavioral health hospital in February 2018, and won an additional 100 beds in the fall of 2018 for a total of 146 beds available to serve adults and adolescents regardless of their ability to pay.



Read Chicago Sun Times Op-Ed, "How a new governor, J.B. Pritzker, can go to bat for the mentally ill right away"



We in the Illinois Metro Industrial Areas Foundation are calling on Pritzker to champion and help hospitals franchise a new generation of crisis stabilization units in our state. They work. They've proven effective in other states. They relieve emergency rooms and prisons of the unbearable pressure of overcrowding. And they give those with mental illness the care they desperately need."

NEW YORK AFFILIATES PRESS DISTRICT ATTORNEYS TO ACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

In 2017, roughly 42% of the 9,500 people incarcerated in NYC each day had a diagnosed mental illness. 200 leaders from Manhattan Together, Southern Bronx Churches, East Brooklyn Congregations, and allies like the Greenburger Center for Social & Criminal Justice, and the New York Daily News gathered at Town and Village Synagogue in Manhattan. The group asked the Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island District Attorneys to go on the record on what they will do to help people with mental health challenges avoid prison and get into treatment. This is part of Metro IAF NY's continued work to build a team that will push for concrete reforms like the establishment of diversion centers, and the expansion of Crisis Intervention Team Training and supportive housing in New York City. Metro IAF affiliates in Illinois have already made significant progress on crisis intervention, and this expands Metro IAF's footprint on this issue across the country.

Metro IAF NY has held four forums, in October and December of 2017, as well as February and April of 2018. In these forums, hundreds of religious, community and mental health leaders gathered to ask outside experts and law enforcement officials from New York City, including District Attorneys and the NYPD Commissioner, what steps are being taken to address these concerns. Metro IAF NY is also exploring engagement with mental health issues beyond the criminal justice system. Manhattan District Attorney Vance recently promised to work with Metro IAF to expand mental health diversion.



Manhattan Together leaders secure commitment from Manhattan DA Cyrus Vance to increase mental health training for his ADA's

YOUTH SUPPORT

Greater Cleveland Congregations fought successfully for educational support for incarcerated youth. Funding for summer school programming for youth incarcerated began in the summer of 2018 at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Facility. Previously, the Detention Facility locked down young people in their units all summer with no learning opportunities. GCC also secured a pledge from the Cleveland Public School system CEO to work towards making the school within the facility operate year-round.