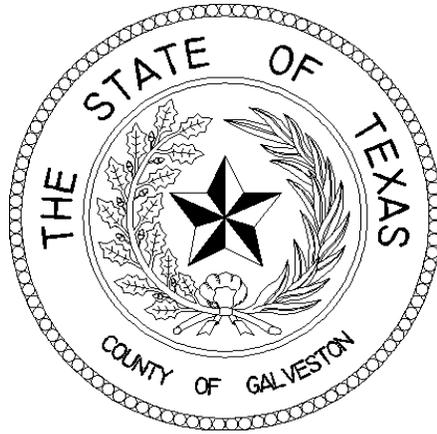


Galveston County



Community Plan 2010-2011

November 2010

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
Sue Johnson	Nia Cultural Center, Inc.
Marsha Wilson-Rappaport	St. Vincent's House

Victim Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Denise Bennett (chair)	Advocacy Center
Rachel Leal	Criminal District Attorney's Office
Judith Boyle	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Angelica Jaramillo	Resource and Crisis Center of Galveston

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>
June Purser	Texas City Police Department
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 2009: 274
- Number of referrals to GCJJD for misdemeanor behavior during 2009: 456. Number of referrals for violation of court order and contempt of magistrate order during 2009: 488. Total number of misdemeanor referrals in 2009: 944
- During 2009 there were 262 adjudications to probation affecting 247 juveniles in Galveston County.
- Total referrals to juvenile probation departments statewide, 2008 (latest year available): 99,276.
- Number of juveniles arrested statewide, 2008: 134,024 (77,287 referred to juvenile probation departments)
- Number of Galveston County juveniles committed to the Texas Youth Commission, FY 2010: 17.

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 2009 including truancy, runaways, theft, disorderly conduct and liquor law violations: **105**
- CINS referrals statewide, 2008: 15,070 (Texas Juvenile Probation Commission)

Discussion

The Galveston County Juvenile Justice Department received 105 referrals concerning CINS children during 2009.

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

Data Collection

Identified Problem

3. Substance abuse by youths and parents

- 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 who can be referred as young as 7 years old are frequently on probation and can be sent back to the local juvenile facility, TYC or even TDC if they will not complete the program.

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 are currently resident in the Juvenile Justice Center. 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, 2009: **653**
- Number of CPS investigations completed, 2008: **2,090**
- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2008) in substitute care: **359**
- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2008) in foster care: **185**

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 2009, Galveston County Children's Protective Services reported 653 confirmed victims of abuse and neglect, following 2,090 investigations. Actual numbers of children in state care have increased every year since 2000. Three-hundred fifty-nine children were in substitute care during 2009, while 185 were in foster care. Additionally there were four fatalities related to child abuse and/or neglect in 2009.

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. Shelter and support services also are provided by Beacon Place, which opened in Galveston in 1999 to provide transitional housing and other support services for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Since opening its doors, Beacon Place, operated by Woman, Inc., has provided subsidized housing and services to hundreds of women and children. The facility is generally at full capacity. Additionally RCC through its CASA program provides volunteers to children who are in the foster care system to speak up in court on what is in the best interest of a child who is in foster care. (See page 16 bullet that references the need to adequately fulfill the needs of children who are a ward of the state within Galveston County.

In the north county, the Friendswood Police Department's' Crime Victim Assistance Program provides a host of services to victims and their families. Bay Area Turning Point

operates a shelter and provides aid to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

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.

The Galveston/Brazoria County Respite Program which was operated by The Children's Center, Inc. and provided temporary planned or emergency childcare for eligible families in Galveston and Brazoria counties no longer exists due to Federal funding cuts. This is a continuing need in Galveston and Brazoria counties.

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 fleeing situations of domestic violence. Nor is there sufficient 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 children 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 survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault
- Expand legal assistance for survivors of domestic violence
- Provide additional staff in the District Attorney's Office for protective orders and prosecution
- Develop more consistent method of notifying survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault about their offenders or cases
- Expand training and education for all professionals dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault
- Expand funding for dedicated victim liaisons in police departments
- Develop state-approved Batterer's Intervention Program (BIP) for court-ordered treatment of offenders

Identified Problem

2. “Throwaway” and homeless youths

Data Collection

- 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)
- Number of children ages 3-17 served daily at the Albertine Yeagar Youth Crisis Center: **18**

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.

Several programs have 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. These facilities assist 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. Program staff works closely with the Gulf Coast Homeless Coalition, state and federal agencies and private donors to secure funding for transitional housing 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.

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.
- Expand transitional living opportunities on the island and mainland

Develop coordinated effort to transition young offenders back into their environment following their release from the juvenile justice system

Identified Problem

Data Collection

3. Child survivors

- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2008) in substitute care: **359**
- Number of Galveston County children (CPS, 2008) in foster care: **185**
- Galveston County children available for adoption (CPS, 2008): **48**
- Number of children receiving in-home services through CPS, 2008: **1,161**

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 2008 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
- Establish a local Drug Endangered Children's (DEC) program for handling children found in dangerous drug environments.
- Renew funding for county's full-time child abuse investigator
- Provide training for law enforcement on internet victimization
- Provide more staff to supervise volunteers that speak up in court on behalf of a child in the foster care system.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

4. Elder survivors

- Population of elderly (age 65-plus) in Galveston County: **32,595**
- Number of Galveston County Adult Protective Services (APS) clients receiving services, 2008: **698** (Department of Family & Protective Services)
- Number of APS investigations completed, 2008: **805** (Department of Family & Protective Services)
- Number of APS investigations confirmed, 2008: **608** (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 Galveston County Community Plan

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
- 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

- Estimated number of rapes committed in Texas, 2005: **8,505** (DPS) (up from 8,401 in 2004).
- Number of reported rapes per 100,000 population in Texas, 2004: **37.4**, (Texas DPS)

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 2008: **2,703**
- Number of murders in Texas, 2008: **1,373**
- Estimated number of aggravated assaults causing severe injury in Texas, 2008: **76,487** (DPS)

Discussion

One hundred eighty-four individuals were arrested for violent crimes in Galveston County during 2008, 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
- Establish a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team 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, 2009: **274**

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.

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

Identified Problem

Data Collection

1. Juvenile Mental Health

- 7.5 million children are affected by mental, developmental or behavioral disorders (NAMI Texas)
- In 2007, 15% of high school students seriously considered attempting suicide, and 11% had made a plan about how they would attempt suicide during the 12 months before taking the survey (Centers for Disease Control).
- In 2007, 8.4% of high school students had attempted suicide in the 12 months preceding the survey (Centers for Disease Control).
-

- 2,585 youth in the Texas Youth Commission and (50%) and nearly half referred to the Juvenile Probation Commission (48%) had a mental illness (Mental Health Association in Texas).
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24 (Centers for Disease Control)
- In 2009 the Teen Health clinics in Galveston County provided 1,774 individual or family counseling sessions and an additional 551 group therapy sessions.
- Through the end of the 3rd quarter of 2010 the Teen Health clinics have provided 3031 individual or family counseling sessions and almost 400 group therapy sessions.
- Teen Health has limited mental health services offered to mainland residents only providing services one day a week in La Marque-leaving an unknown number with minimal access to services.
- 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.
- Second tier needs identified include anxiety disorders and family counseling needs.

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

- In 2008, **24.3 million** adults aged 18 and over experienced serious psychological distress (SAMHSA, 2009)
- Persons aged **45-64 years (3.8%)** were more likely to have experienced serious psychological distress compared with persons aged **18-44 years (2.8%)** and **65 years and over (2.2%)** (Centers for Disease Control)
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 25-34 year olds.(Center for Disease Control)
- Through the first 9 months of 2010 the Gulf Coast Center has served an average of 2343 adult MH clients per month across its four MHMR clinics in Galveston County, with a

current waiting list of 102 clients.

- Galveston and Brazoria Counties share 20 in-patient psychiatry beds located at St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston.
- Since September 30, 2010, St. Joseph's Hospital has accepted 225 in-patient admits from Brazoria County and 574 from Galveston County.
- The Mental Health Clinic at St. Vincent's House is operating well over capacity. It can only see 30 patients every other Thursday night. Therefore 60 patients are seen by volunteer physicians a month, despite the 45-plus patients that are waiting to see the doctor at each clinic. As a result, while 1,080 patients are in need of service, only 720 patients are seen annually (only meeting 2/3 of demand)
- In FY 2009 TDCJ released 936 ex-offenders to Galveston County, or an average of 78 persons per month.1 (to bulleted section)

Discussion

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.

Mental disorders are common in the United States and internationally. An estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older – about one in four adults suffer from diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. When applied to the 2004 U. S. Census residential population estimate for ages 18 and older, this figure translates to 57.7 million people. Even though mental disorders are widespread in the population, the main burden of illness is concentrated in a much smaller proportion about 6 percent, or 1 in 17 who suffer from a serious mental illness. In addition, mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the United States and Canada for ages 15-44.

Anyone can have mental illness, regardless of age gender race or socioeconomic level.

Mental illness can occur at any age approximately 20-25% of individuals may be affected by mental illness. 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 comorbidity.

Major depression, the leading cause of disability in the US, affects more than 9 million adults in a given year. Nearly twice as many women (6.7 million) as men (3.2 million) are affected each year. Bipolar disorder causes extreme shifts in mood energy and functioning affects more than 2 million in the US. Most people at one time or another experience obsessive thoughts or compulsive behaviors. 2.2 million People in the US suffer from Schizophrenia.

Mental illness can and should be treated. Nearly two-thirds of all people with a diagnosable mental disorder do not seek treatment. 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. 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 oftentimes 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). 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.

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. 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.

Drug Courts: An example of coordinated care across service silos is found in recent efforts to establish a Drug Court in Galveston County. Encompassing the Criminal Justice system, community groups such as Restorative Justice, The Gulf Coast Center, treatment providers, UTMB, each faction supplies expertise toward the goal of increased competence for self-care in the client population, decreased collateral damage in family structures, increased measures of community health. A total of 119 individuals received screenings for substance abuse treatment while incarcerated in the Galveston County Jail as part of the groundwork for an official Drug Court in the County. This work was funded by The Disaster Social Service Block Grant which ended September 30, 2010. However, funding for the Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor who provided this service has been secured for an additional year. Providing screenings for substance abuse treatment, referral for treatment and liaison with the District Attorney's office has facilitated jail diversion and connected local individuals to services which reduce the potential for crime, and decrease the public burden in the areas of criminal justice, foster care and unsponsored health care. This pilot effort can only be sustained and its outcomes enhanced through the establishment of an official drug court.

Mental Health Courts: St. Vincent's House became the unexpected provider of choice for those suffering from mental illness after Hurricane Ike. UTMB, the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, has not yet fully recovered and does not anticipate full functionality in the near future as it pertains to mental health services.

The Mental Health Clinic at St. Vincent's House is operating well over capacity. It can only see 30 patients every other Thursday night. Therefore 60 patients are seen by doctors a month, despite the 45+ patients that are waiting to see the doctor at each clinic. The gap in services therefore: Seen: 720 patients per year- Demand: 1,080+.

Our current demand is significant for a variety of reasons. St. Vincent's House is struggling with the costs of providing medications for this many mentally ill clients. And untreated mentally ill clients are most likely to ultimately engage law enforcement in a negative fashion and find themselves incarcerated when they act out in socially unacceptable ways.

Essentially the extreme demand now being experienced at St. Vincent's House, rapidly becomes an issue left for law enforcement to address. Not only is "warehousing" mentally ill citizens in jails an inadequate solution in terms of short and long term treatment, it is extremely costly and it utilizes valuable jail space better suited for criminals. Finding a method of abating this particular problem would fill a much needed gap in services in Galveston County.

A mental health liaison works between MHMR, the courts, and the county jail. Individuals caught between treatment and incarceration need an advocate to link individual needs to community resources. A mental health court modeled on work done by the GAIN center will reduce mentally ill "frequent fliers" in the criminal justice system and more appropriately serve them in the community.

In summary Mental Illnesses are more common than cancer, diabetes, heart disease or AIDS. Some resources are available in the county, but a number of factors, including the closure of Rebecca Sealy Hospital and lack of funding for both in and out patient resources, limits effectiveness of care that can be provided. Efforts are needed to do the following:

- Need for substantially more public education about mental illnesses, there affects and available treatment.
- Collaboration of Service providers for adults with mental illnesses.
- Funding to support services and treatment for adults with mental disorders.
- Partnerships between Law enforcement and Medical personnel for behavioral assistance.
- Community-based programs to teach disorder management skills.
- Enhanced availability and funding of aftercare and outpatient mental health programs, particularly for the uninsured/underinsured.
- Enhanced availability of outpatient mental health programs, particularly for the uninsured/underinsured.
- Working with inpatient and outpatient mental health services providers – particularly in the balance of region – establish new and strengthen existing programs designed to holster long-term patient care and support for both patients and caregivers.
- Establishing partnerships with neighboring counties to add conveniently accessible bed space for in-patient mental health care.
- Establishing localized clinics, available 24X7, to provide emergency services and stabilization to patients in crisis situations.

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.

Contact Information

Galveston County Community Planning Coordinator

Connie Nicholson, Grants Coordinator
Galveston County Office of Finance and Administration
722 Moody, Suite 317
Galveston, Texas 77550
409-770-5355
281-534-8442
409-766-4551 FAX
connie.nicholson@co.galveston.tx.us

Galveston County Community Planning Liaison from Houston-Galveston Area Council

James Mahood, Criminal Justice Planning Coordinator
Houston-Galveston Area Council
3555 Timmons Lane
Houston, TX 77227-2777
713- 627-3200
713-993-2412 FAX
james.mahood@h-gac.com

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.”

Part II – Community Planning Group

Participants in October-
November 2010 plan review
Last updated 11/17/10

Denise Bennett

Advocacy Center for Children
5710 Ave S ½
Galveston, Texas 77551
409-741-6000
cachtherapy@sbcglobal.net

Judith Boyle

Children's Protective Services
123 Rosenberg
Galveston, TX 77550
409-766-5960
Judith.boyle@dfps.state.tx.us

Latisha Boxley

Communities in Schools
2201 Market St., Suite 715
Galveston, TX 77550
409-762-5395
mtciscalv@aol.com

Carla Costello

Texas City Police Dept.
1004 Ninth Ave. N.
Texas City, TX 77590
409-643-5831
ccostello@texas-city-tx.org

Sue Davis

The Gulf Coast Center
123 Rosenberg, Suite 6
Galveston, Texas 77550
409-944-4337
sued@gcmhmr.com

Faith Garate

Galveston County Juvenile Justice Dept.
6101 Attwater Ave.
Dickinson, TX 77539
409-770-5914
Faith.garate@co.galveston.tx.us

Ellie Hanley

ADA Women's Center
201 First Street
Galveston, Texas 77553
409-763-5516
e.hanley@adawomenscenter.org

Rachel Leal

District Attorney-Victim Coordinator
600 59th Street, Suite 1001
Galveston, TX 77550
409-770-5124
Rachel.leal@co.galveston.tx.us

Debbie Kumar-Misir, LMSW

Children's Protective Services
123 Rosenberg
Galveston, TX 77550
409-766-5931
deborah.kumar-misir@dfps.state.tx.us

Connie Nicholson

Galveston County Grants Department
722 Moody, suite 317
Galveston, TX 77550
281-534-8442 or 409-770-5355
Connie.nicholson@co.galveston.tx.us

Teresa Ortiz

Galveston County Parks & Senior Services
4102 Main (FM 519)
La Marque, TX 77568
409-934-8100
Teresa.ortiz@co.galveston.tx.us

Freddie Poor

Galveston County Sheriff
601 54th Street
Galveston, TX 77551
409-766-2322
freddie.poor@co.galveston.tx.us

Lisa Price

Friendswood Police Department
1600 Whitaker Drive
Friendswood, TX 77546
281-996-3313
lprice@ci.friendswood.tx.us

June Purser, PhD

Family Service Center
2200 Market St., Suite 600
Galveston, TX 77550
409-762-8636
jpurser@fscgal.org

Marsha Rappaport
St. Vincent's House
2817 Postoffice
Galveston, TX 77550
409-763-8521
marshal@swbell.net

Cindy Schulz
Gulf Coast Big Brothers-Big Sisters
621 Moody Ave., Suite 102
Galveston, TX 77550
409-763-4638
cschulz@gulfcoastbbbs.org

Ray Tuttoilmondo
Galveston County Sheriff's Office
601 54th Street
Galveston, TX 77550
409-766-2369
Ray.tutt@co.galveston.tx.us