

Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative: Crisis Diversion Facility Update

Department: Police

What are the racial and equity impacts?

The Crisis Diversion Facility will be open for all Orange County community members who are in crisis and are amenable to travel or be transported to the facility by law enforcement or other service providers. This facility is designed to bridge people from crisis response to the care continuum with greater ease and speed than traditional hospital emergency room care models. The facility will be staffed by medical and mental health professionals and is designed to provide crisis care upon arrival.

Who is or will experience community burden?

Funding for the facility will burden taxpayers. Depending on the funding model, taxpayer burden may be spread across both county and municipal entities. Because the facility will be outside the municipal limits of Carrboro, people without transportation to the facility may be burdened. The police department has traditionally provided transportation to people in crisis to the hospital ER and the department plans to offer the same option for the new crisis facility if staffing and call volume allows it. EMS also provides transportation in certain cases. Chapel Hill Transit routes could be modified to provide access to the new facility as well should the need exist and resources are available.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

People in crisis will experience benefit as there will be a facility specifically designed for these types of situations. Current options for crisis management will be enhanced by this facility having 24/7/365 access for crisis intervention. In addition, the community in general may also see reduced visibility of people in crisis as this facility focuses on longer-term treatment cycles that can be more effective in providing supportive care past the initial crisis. This extended client care and focus should result in reduced use of both law enforcement and hospital resources for these types of situations in the community.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Inequities in the greater society manifest in people's ability to access care for mental health, substance use, or other challenges. This planned facility makes crisis care more accessible to all community members and creates another option that will move the needle toward more access to crisis intervention options for more people in the community. Health access and health insurance inequities can create barriers for people to receive appropriate mental health or other care. This facility will be accessible for all community members.

What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?

Building and staffing a 24-hour facility is expensive. Costs can be difficult to predict and project over time with accuracy. While this facility is designed for people in crisis, one unknown factor is whether people in crisis will be willing to utilize the facility and be transported there for care. Another question is whether there is a consistent and ongoing need to justify the creation of a stand-alone facility in Orange County. These questions have been studied and addressed in the planning phase of this project and data suggests that this facility will fill a service gap for crisis care in the community.

How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?

This facility will be managed by Orange County so no Town of Carrboro departments will have any administrative responsibility for the facility. First responders - the police department, the fire department, EMS, and possibly Orange County's Criminal Justice Resource Division staffers will have responsibility for providing assessment and possible transportation for people in crisis to the facility. Much like the police department's current operating procedures, people in crisis will be provided transportation to this facility as resources allow. These procedures will be evaluated and updated as necessary to facilitate proper functioning. Orange County will have overall management responsibility for the facility. Additional questions can be directed to the presenters from Orange County on this specific question.