



Response Systems Division

Whatcom County Health Board

April 25, 2023



Response Systems Division

- ✓ Operate five unique direct service programs serving vulnerable community members.
- ✓ Community built programs.
- ✓ Relationship centered growth.
- ✓ System improvement, system collaboration, system solutions.
- ✓ Contract management.



Whatcom County Council

Public Health Advisory Board

Erika Lautenbach
Director

Finance/
Admin

Org/Comm
Development
Division

Environmental
Health
Division

Communicable
Disease
Division

Community
Services
Division

**Response
Systems
Division**

Malora Christensen
(Manager)

Ashley Smith

Ground-Level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) Program

Tommy McAuliffe

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program

Robin Willins

Mental Health Court Program

Lacey McCarley

RSD Nurse Practitioner Program

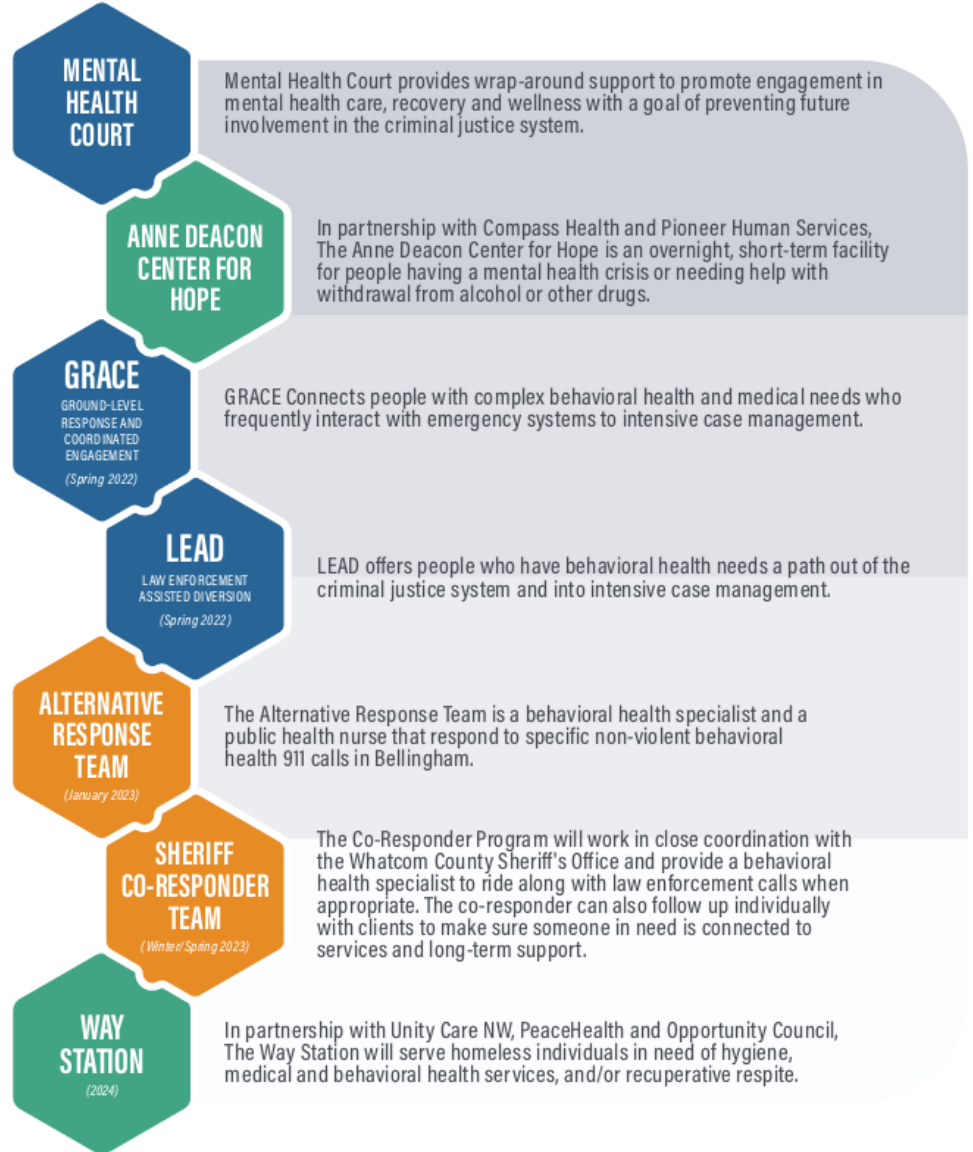
Jon Dukes

Alternative Response Team (ART) & Co-Responder Program

RESPONSE SYSTEMS DIVISION SERVICES TIMELINE 2022-2024



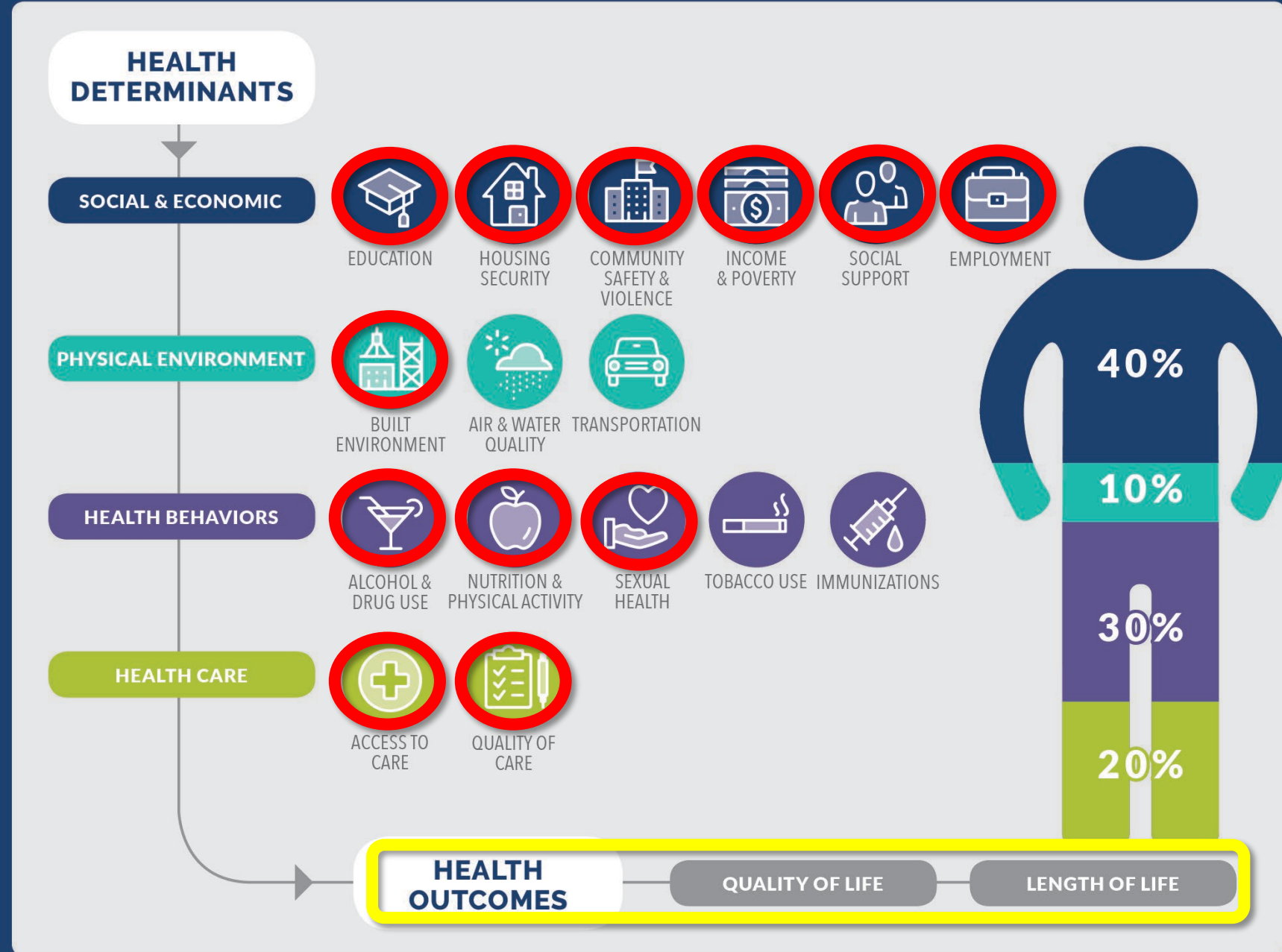
- This roadmap shows the different response services provided by WCHD over the coming 12 months and beyond
- These are some but not all of WCHD's behavioral health programs
- Our community partners provide other programs not shown on this roadmap





The Response Systems Division Programs directly address crucial **determinants of health**, that impact individual and population **health outcomes**.

Population Health Framework: What Goes Into Health?





Ground-Level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) Program

The GRACE program provides intensive support to people who are frequent users of emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement (LE), hospital emergency department (ED), and the Whatcom County jail.

**Years Operating:
2018 - Present**

Program Staffing:



- Program Supervisor



- Nurse Practitioner



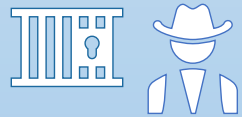
- **5 Intensive Case Managers**

(2 at BPD, 1 at FD7, 2 at BFD)

Caseload Capacity:

75-100

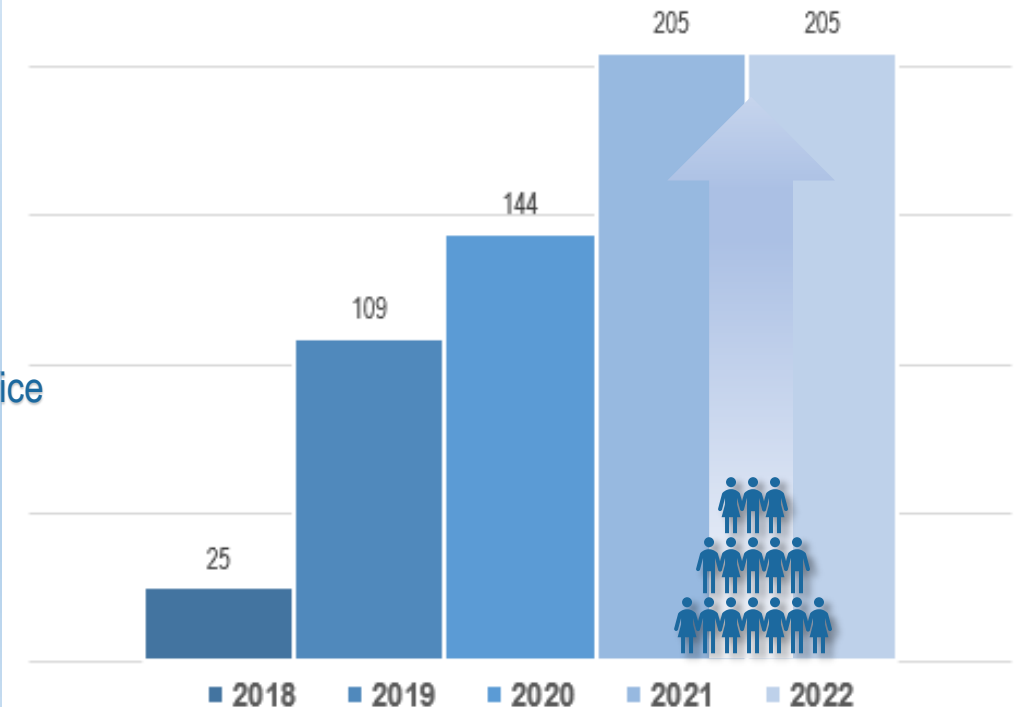
Key Partners:



- Bellingham Fire
- Bellingham Police
- Ferndale Fire
- Peace Health
- Whatcom EMS
- Whatcom Jail
- Whatcom Sheriff's Office

- Programmatic challenges:
 - Data sharing limitations
 - City vs County
- Program successes:
 - Lynden Police Dept.

The **# of individuals** served by GRACE has increased by 720% since 2018





Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program


The Whatcom LEAD program is a community-based effort to lead people out of the criminal justice system and into intensive case management where those who are dealing with behavioral health issues can have their needs met appropriately.

**Years Operating:
2020 - Present**

Program Staffing:

 Program Supervisor

 Admin/Data

 **5** Intensive Case Managers

 **3** Outreach Coordinators

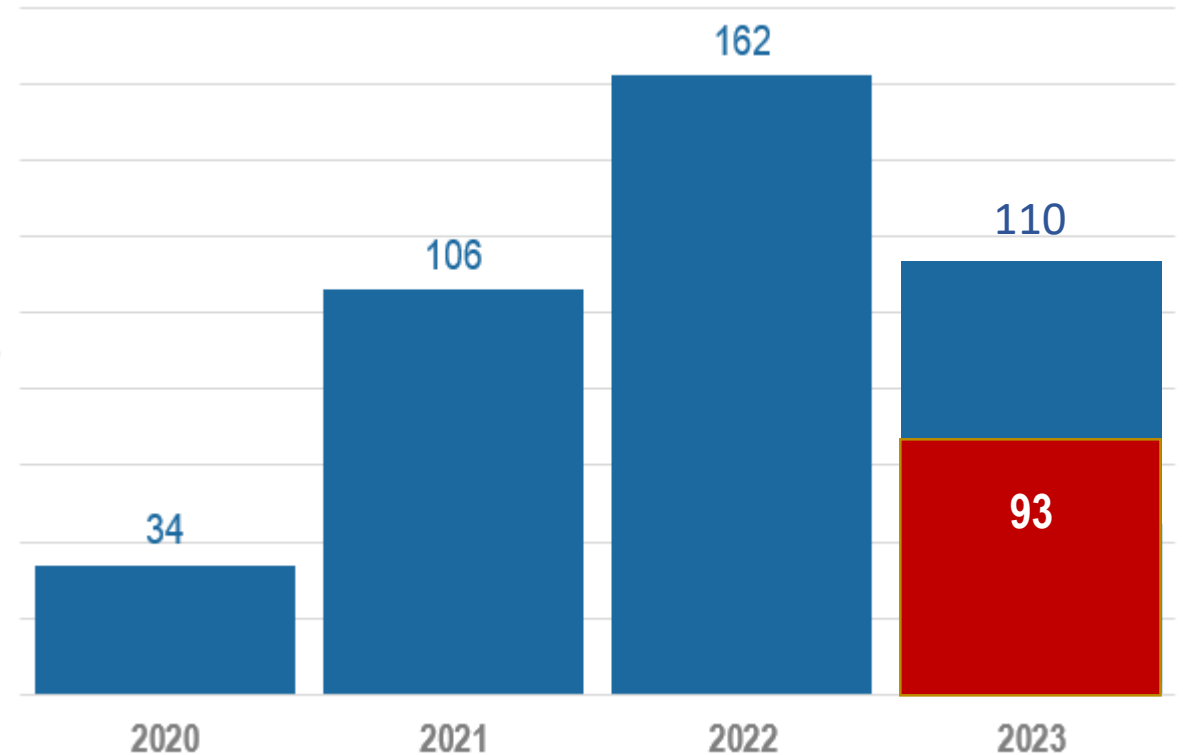
Caseload Capacity: 120-140

Key Partners:

-  • Bellingham Police
-  • Ferndale Police
-  • Whatcom Sheriff's Office
- City/County Prosecutors
-  • Whatcom Public Defenders
- Whatcom Jail
- Whatcom EMS

- Programmatic challenges: Mental Health service capacity
- Program successes: Stability & connection thru hoteling clients

Currently serving **115** individuals, with **98** currently experiencing homelessness...





Mental Health Court Program

Mental Health Court (MHC) is an 18-24 month therapeutic court program designed to provide wraparound support and intervene when someone's mental health challenges have brought them into the judicial system. MHC seeks to promote engagement in mental health care, recovery and wellness to prevent future involvement in the judicial system and build capacity for healthy, independent living.

**Years Operating:
2015 - Present**

Program Staffing:



Program Manager



**Behavioral
Health Specialist**

8 Case Managers (Sub-contracted)



CCS, UCNW, SeaMar, Compass, Lifeline
Connections, Lake Whatcom Center

Enrollment Capacity: 40 members

• Programmatic challenges:

- Shortage of MH & SUD providers
- Treatment and housing
- Court docket

• Program successes:

- 114 unique individuals served since program started
- Reduction in recidivism at any dose
- Growing referrals and enrollments
- In-person support and court

Key Partners:



- **Bellingham Municipal Court** 
- **Bellingham City Attorney**
- **North County Public Defense**
- **Whatcom County Probation**
- **Whatcom County District Court**
- **Whatcom County Public Defense**
- **Whatcom County Prosecutor**
- **Whatcom County Jail**

District Court MHC



MHC Team: Weekly

- ❖ Judge Angela Anderson
- ❖ Whatcom County Public Defense
- ❖ Whatcom County Prosecutor
- ❖ District Court Probation:
Behavioral Health Unit
- ❖ MHC program managers and BHS
- ❖ Case manager/Community
Providers *
- ❖ Member
 - 22 Actively enrolled
 - 3 scheduled admits
 - 1 Warrant status
 - 14 pending referrals

Wellness Calendar, BMC



Wellness Calendar Team: Bi-weekly

- ❖ Commissioner Nickolas Henery
- ❖ North County Public Defense
- ❖ City of Bellingham Attorney
- ❖ District Court Probation:
Behavioral Health Unit
- ❖ MHC program manager and BHS
- ❖ Case manager/Community
Providers *
- ❖ Member
 - 6 actively enrolled
 - 3 pending referrals

***Providers/Community Providers**

**Catholic Community Services, Unity Care NW, Lake Whatcom
Treatment Center, Compass Health, Lifeline Connections, SEAMAR,
Pioneer Human Services, City Gate, SUN House, Opportunity Council**



RSD Nurse Practitioner Program

- Program Services:**
- Acute care services with bridges to primary care with short term chronic care management.
 - Post-hospital follow-up and pre-hospital diversion.
 - Bridging behavioral health medications until BH prescriber or primary care are established.
 - Care coordination and advocacy for patients.



Key Partners:

- Lighthouse Mission
- Bridge2Services
- Unity Care
- Sea Mar
- Peace Health
- Opportunity Council
- EMS, BFD, BPD
- Downtown Security
- Road2Home
- City Gate
- Compass Health



Street Medicine: Collaboration with **EMS** office to utilize **Medical Reserve Corp volunteers** in coordination with **Road2Home social workers** to provide social medicine outreach to our most vulnerable houseless neighbors.

- Has been active 3 months with plan for 3 more months of pilot before re-evaluation.
- Currently 4 hours weekly with small cohort.
- Average 1-2 “clinic visits” with 15 goodwill encounters per shift.



- **Challenges:** **Wait times** for access to BH and primary care services, need for more **treatment beds**, **barriers to care** specific to homelessness, **lack of housing options** for people with serious health concerns, **insurance** status, system navigation

- **Successes:** **Street Medicine project**, **connecting providers** and patients in a meaningful moment; **decreasing EMS** use, coordinating **oncology care**, **isolation and quarantine** facility

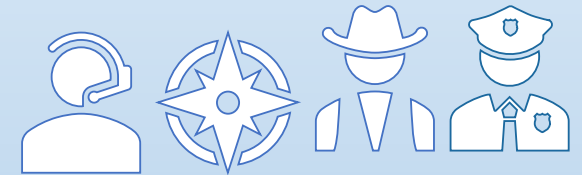


Alternative Response Team (ART) & Co-Responder Program • Year started: 2023

The ART program provides a coordinated mobile alternative to law enforcement response to aid people in crisis from known or suspected mental illness, substance use, or inability to care for themselves in the moment of crisis. ART responds to low risk, low acuity calls.

The Co-Responder program will work collaboratively with the WCSO and the BHD to aid people in crisis. Behavioral Health specialist will be embedded with WCSO Deputies or will outreach in teams of two when scene is safe.

Programs launched in 2023



Staffing:



- Program Supervisor
- Admin/Data
- ART



- 2 Behavioral Health Specialists
- 2 Nurses
- Co-Responder



- 2 Behavioral Health Specialists

Key Partners:

- **WhatComm 911**
- **Compass Health**
- **Whatcom County Sheriff's Office**
- **Bellingham Police**



Micro, Macro and everything in between.

- ✓ Julota and Data Sharing Agreements
- ✓ 1st Responder Training Project
- ✓ 1st Responder Field-based tools
- ✓ System improvement and coordination
- ✓ Community training needs and supports for social service providers
- ✓ Rapid Cycle Improvement (feedback in real time)





Thank you for your time!