

# Mental Health & Safety Task Force Report Update

Board of Supervisors  
Presentation  
November 17, 2020

# Task Force Report Summary

## Areas of Focus:

1. Early Identification and Intervention – 5 Recommendations
2. Crisis Response and Coordination – 4 Recommendations
3. Initial Treatment and Services – 3 Recommendations
4. Long-term Treatment and Case Management -7 Recommendations
5. On-going Engagement – 7 Recommendations

## Summary

- Presented to Board of Supervisors – January 21, 2020
- 5 Focus Areas - 26 recommendations
- 15 have been completed/on-going
- 9 in-progress
- 2 in the planning stage

Early Identification of and  
Intervention with Persons  
Suffering from Mental Illness

## Recommendation

1. Expand offerings of the “Threat Assessment training offered by the Sheriff’s Office to all Ventura County schools in a variety of different formats. Train additional law enforcement personnel to provide the training. Supplement the training with online resources and a toolkit for schools. Offer the training to the greater community including businesses and community-based organizations

Evaluation only.

Status

Completed

## Key Activities

- Ventura PD: Training Officers. School resource officer (SRO) lead in training at schools. Bi-annual training for the community.
- Oxnard PD: SRO provide training to all schools, including “early warning signs”. Active shooter training for the community.
- Simi PD: Provides in school training as well as community training
- FBI’s online Active Shooter Resource Library is utilized and used as a resource.

Early Identification of and  
Intervention with Persons  
Suffering from Mental Illness

Recommendation

2. Update and expand the mobile phone app incident reporting system (iCop) used by law enforcement for tracking encounters. Explore methods to encourage all law enforcement agencies within Ventura County to submit crisis contact card electronically. Create a way to flag persons who receive multiple crisis contact cards, and to share this information with the Behavioral Health Department, in order to provide additional real-time outreach and referrals to supportive mental health services.

Status

In Progress

Key Activities

- Finalizing data sharing agreement with Behavioral Health
- Assessing upgrade to iCOP and electronic crisis contact card information
- Crisis Intervention Team is able to identify multiple crisis contact events and notify Behavioral Health

Early Identification of and  
Intervention with Persons  
Suffering from Mental Illness

### Recommendation

3. Promote communication with all Ventura County schools regarding the availability of mental health services, the recognition of early warning signs and available reporting options. List all available services and resources on all school websites. Provide information for and/or have Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) employees attend Back-to-School nights.

Evaluation only.

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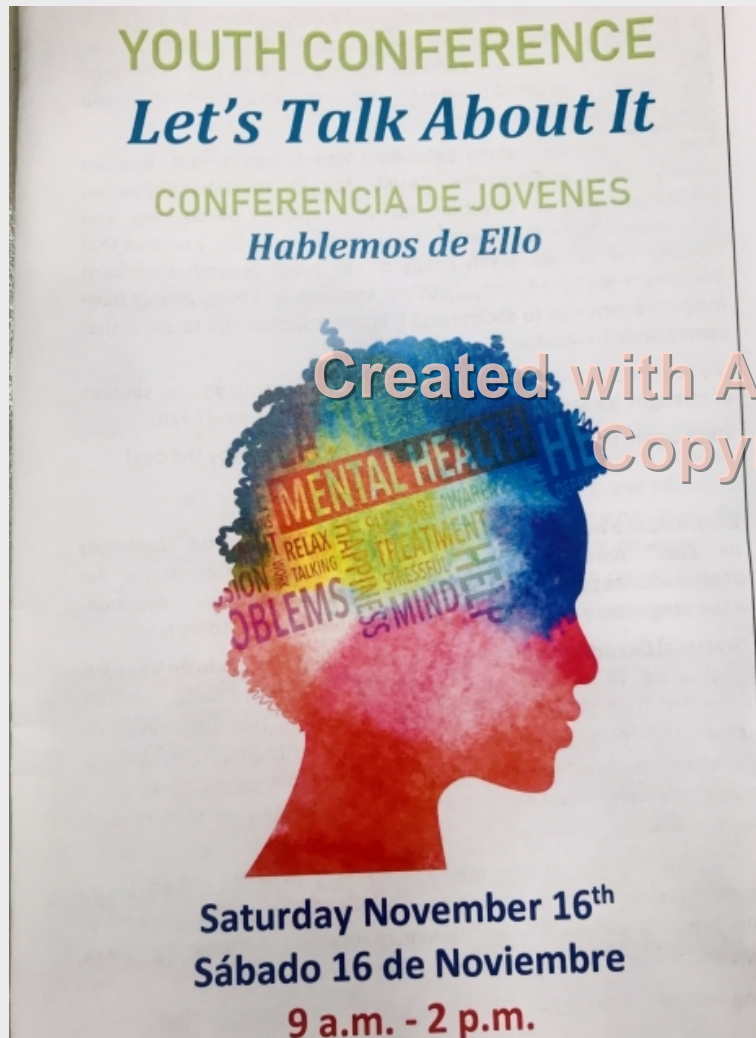
### Status

Completed

### Key Activities

- Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) website has been updated with behavioral health information and process as it pertains to crisis care in Ventura County for youth

## Youth Wellness Outreach



- Youth are encouraged to refer themselves or others for services using the two Access Lines ran by Behavioral Health.
- Outreach materials with website and access line info is provided at all outreach events in the community, at school sites, and with community service providers.
- This will be even more available given the collaboration with VCOE to create and run Wellness Centers (virtually initially) for High School Students through \$6 million in mental health service grant funds.
- Programs such as The Youth Mental Health Conference hosted with Assembly member Jacqui Irwin last fall and VCOE, showcase ways that students are targeted and outreached to in engaging and informative platforms.



Early Identification of and  
Intervention with Persons  
Suffering from Mental Illness

### Recommendation

4. Update all Health Care Agency websites to provide links to information about the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), Inpatient Unit (IPU) and the 5150/5585 mental health hold process and criteria.

Evaluation only.

Status

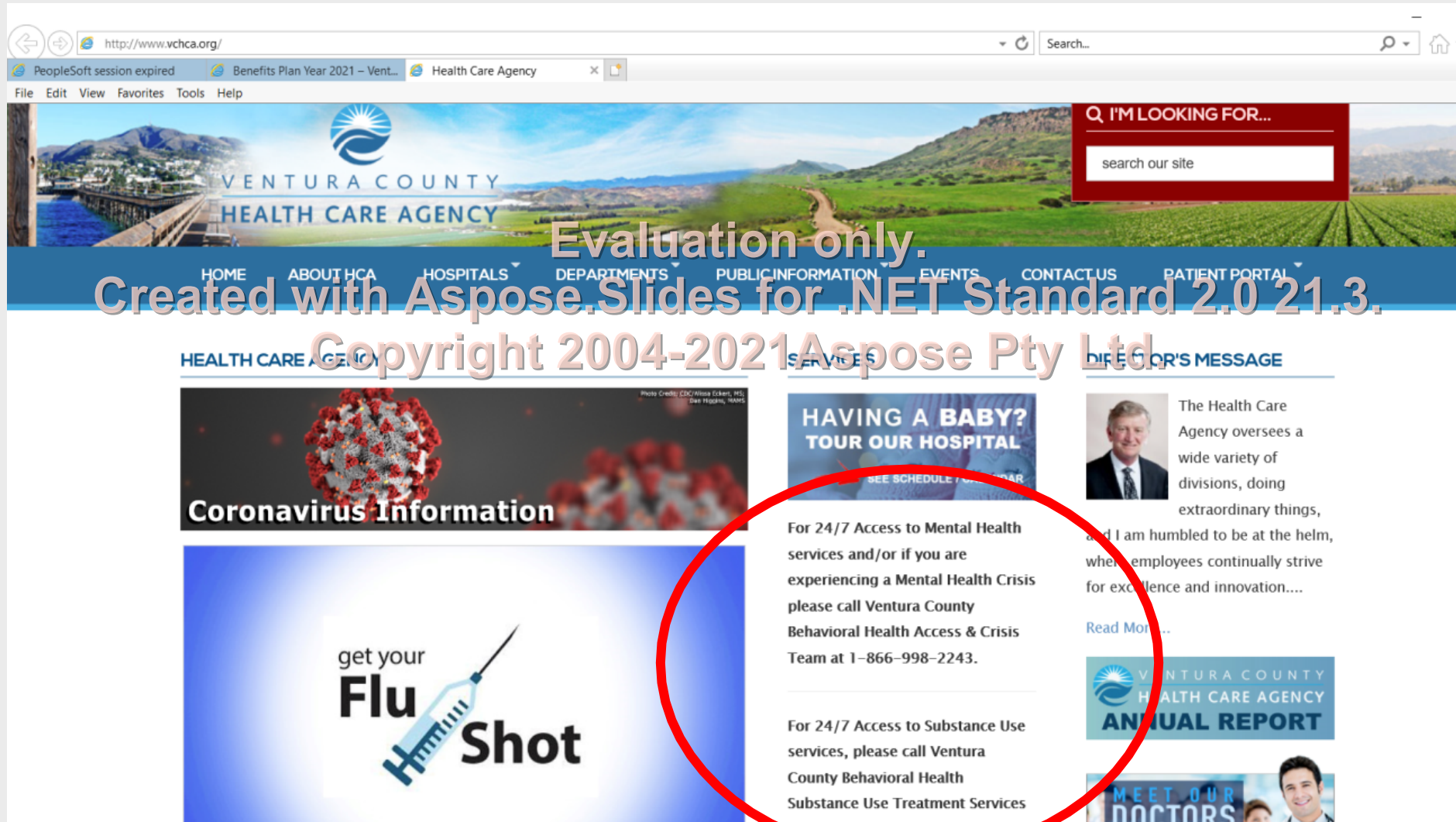
Completed

### Key Activities

- HCA/VCMC/PH Websites updated (7/6/20)
- Legal process for 5150/5585 to be incorporated online (11/1/20)
- Additional enhances to BHD webpage regarding crisis intervention with the Crisis Team.



# Access from Multiple Sources





Early Identification of and  
Intervention with Persons  
Suffering from Mental Illness

Recommendation

5. Engage in public education related to the following topics:
  - a) “See something, say something” and early recognition of warning signs;
  - b) Availability of mental health services;
  - c) 5150/5585 mental health holds including requirements, restrictions and use;
  - d) CSU/IPU functions, operations and general information;
  - e) Use and restrictions of Gun Violence Restraining Orders; and
  - f) Availability of the Veteran’s Crisis Line.

Status

Completed & Ongoing public engagement

Key Activities

- Multiple presentations have been developed and given.
- Access to presentation provided via VCOE and other websites
- Presentation provided to various groups and organizations

# Public Information: Crisis Help

Browser address bar: <https://vcbh.org/en/get-help/get-help-in-a-crisis>

Page Title: Get Help in a Crisis

Menu: File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Ventura County Behavioral Health  
A Department of Ventura County Health Care Agency

GET HELP ▾ PROGRAMS & SERVICES ▾ INFORMATION & RESOURCES ▾ ABOUT US ▾ ESPAÑOL

## GET HELP IN A CRISIS

**What You Need to Know During a Mental Health Crisis**

**Do I call 911 or the Crisis Team?**

Call 911 if there is an immediate threat to life, such as violent behavior, presence of weapons, or a medical emergency (overdose, injury, etc.). You can request that police send Crisis Intervention Trained (CIT) officers, if available. These are officers who have been through specialized training on how to address mental health emergencies.

Call the Ventura County Crisis Team at 1-866-998-2243, if the individual is experiencing a mental health emergency and is otherwise physically and medically stable.

**What do I do after 911 is called?**

1. Prepare your home before police arrive by removing any items that could be used or perceived as a weapon. Turn on all the lights in your home to improve visibility and turn off all the audio (televisions, stereos) to reduce distractions. Secure any pets that may appear to pose a threat or be an unwelcome distraction. Also, be prepared to tell police who else is in the home and/or make arrangements for those people to leave before the

**RELATED LINKS**

- Call Now
- Assessment & Referral
- Mobile Crisis Response Team
- RISE Program

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Icons: Facebook, Twitter, Email, Share

## Recommendation

1. In order to ensure consistent application of mental health holds, promote discussion between County agencies (VCBH; County Counsel; Probation; Sheriff's Office; VCMC) to solidify a shared understanding of the applicable definition of and defining criteria for 5150/5585 mental health holds (including danger to self, danger to others and grave disability). Share the resulting understanding, as permissible, with external organizations (HASC, NAMIVC, VCOE, etc.) and all area hospitals.

## Status

In-progress

## Key Activities

- Initial meetings have been concluded (progress has slowed due to COVID response and diversion of resources)

## Recommendation

2. Develop a guide that can be used when drafting a 5150/5585 mental health hold. Incorporate input from internal County agencies (Behavioral Health; County Counsel; Probation; Sheriff's Office; VCMC) as well as external organizations (HASC, NAMIVC, VCOE, and others).

Evaluation only.

Status

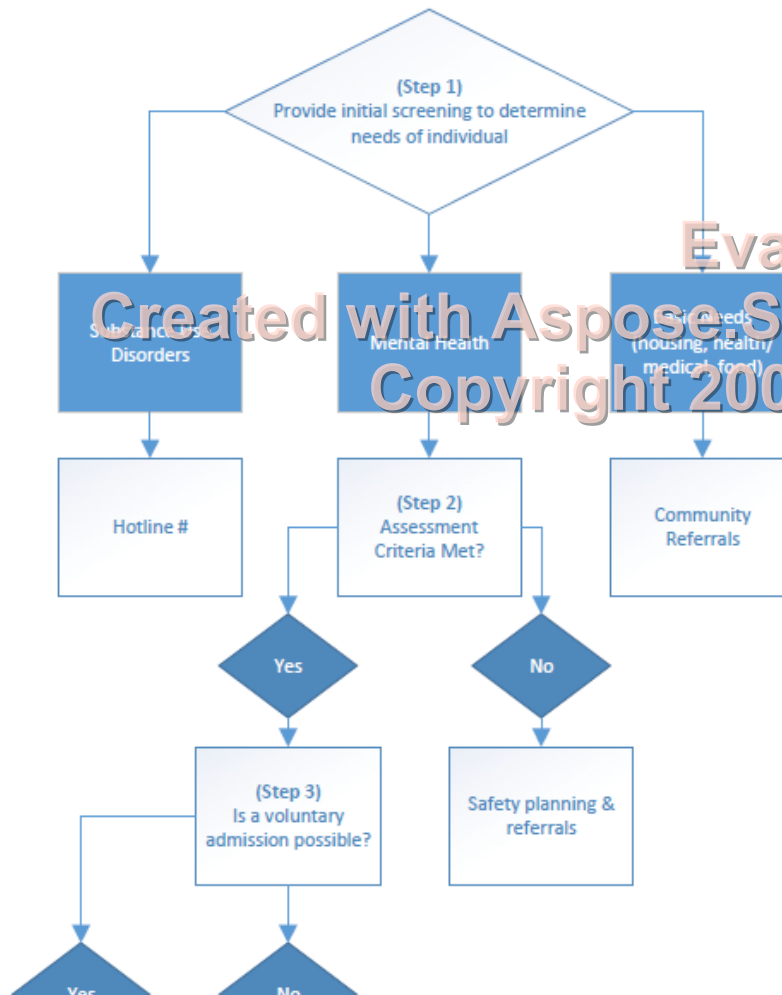
Completed

## Key Activities

- Completed 5150/5585 guide, posted on Behavioral Health webpage.
- Input into the 5150/5585 guide with the engagement of law enforcement stakeholders.

# Guide - 5150/5585 Practices

## How to Help When There Has Been a Call with a Concern About an Individual



- **Step 2: Assessment:** varies case by case, many factors are considered, including but not limited to: gathering collateral and historical relevant info if available, including available supports.

At the conclusion of the assessment, the goal is to determine if as a result of a mental health disorder, criteria is present:

**Danger to self:** There is probable cause to believe that, as a result of a mental health disorder, the individual presents as a danger to themselves. Factors considered may include: observable behavior, what the individual is saying/doing, relevant history, available collateral information, evidence of a deliberate attempt to hurt themselves, a disregard for personal safety, and/or prior suicide attempts.

**Danger to others:** There is probable cause to believe that, as a result of a mental health disorder, the individual presents as a danger to others. The factors considered include all of those listed above (in "1. Danger to Themselves") plus additional factors such as access to weapons; any prior history of severe aggression or violence; and/or disregard for the safety of others.

**\*\* UPDATE W/ MINORS \*\*** Grave disability: W&I 5151 states that a person is "gravely disabled" when, as a result of a mental health disorder, he/she is unable to provide for their own food, clothing or shelter or is currently unable to take advantage of food, clothing or shelter even though it may be provided to them by another person.

- **Step 3: Voluntary:** The individual must recognize the need for treatment, willing to comply with treatment recommendations and can consent to treatment. Status of

## Recommendation

3. Develop a formal education program that requires follow-up Crisis Intervention training every 2-3 years to promote consistent interpretation of 5150/5585 mental health hold criteria. Provide refresher materials on 5150/5585 mental health hold criteria, common risk factors, definition of “danger to self” and “danger to others,” and “grave disability” and the overall 5150/5585 mental health hold writing process.

## Status

Completed

## Key Activities

- The California Commission of Peace Officers Standards and Training has approved an 8-hour Crisis Intervention Training update course and classes which are currently being scheduled.



## Recommendation

4. Formalize law enforcement procedures for use of disengagement/reengagement practices in specified situations. Outline specific situational criteria for when disengagement is appropriate, along with procedures for reengagement and utilization of alternate contact methods.

Evaluation only.

Status

Completed

## Key Activities

- The Ventura County Sheriff's Office has developed and implemented disengagement training and protocol that addresses situations where continued police contact may result in unnecessary risk to the subject, public, or law enforcement person

Crisis Response and  
Coordination

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## Recommendation

1. Engage in discussion with other medical facilities throughout the county to promote the creation of and/or funding of additional adult CSU and IPU beds.

## Status

In-progress

## Key Activities

- HCA Leadership and County CEO held meetings with all the local hospital systems to explore options to expand CSU/IPU capacity.
- HCA FY 2020-21 budget approved to expand the CSU chairs by 8 and IPU beds by 6 (Anticipated January 2021 start).
- Crisis Residential Treatment (CRT) in Santa Paula has received clearance, anticipated opening Summer 2021.
- St. John's planning to open an 8-chair CSU, Spring 2021
- Planning potential project to develop 100 - 120 Mental Health Rehabilitation Center (MHRC) and 20 beds Psychiatric Hospital Facility (project 4-5 years)
- Advocacy for increasing Medi-cal inpatient treatment rate

Initial Treatment and  
Services

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Initial Treatment and  
Services

### Recommendation

2. Educate hospital emergency department staff about situations when law enforcement should be asked to stay with a patient. Request that emergency departments hire security staff to oversee patients so that law enforcement staff are not asked to remain for situations where the patient is calm or does not demonstrate a risk to themselves or others.

Status

Planned

### Key Activities

- Meetings are to be planned to develop a protocol in cooperation with each of the hospital systems.

Initial Treatment and  
Services

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### Recommendation

3. Facilitate patient transfers and allow for faster patient admission to mental health facilities by pursuing a process where the Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Response Team, CSU and IPU staff might have lawful access and ability to enter and review tuberculosis test results (and other immunizations) in both the VCMC electronic medical record and California Immunization Registries (CAIR) databases.

Status

In-Progress

### Key Activities

- On-going discussion with Crisis Residential Treatment (CRT) provider regarding integration of services within the crisis response continuum.
- Clarification provided on TB requirements. There is no requirement for a negative TB test for admission to the CSU or IPU.

Long-Term Treatment and  
Case Management

### Recommendation

1. Work with the VCBH point of authorization personnel to ensure maximum reimbursement is received for CSU and IPU services in order to sustain and build those services

Evaluation only.

Status

Completed

### Key Activities

- Utilization Review team implemented a template for the Doctors to use which allows for a simplified charting standard required for maximum billable services as appropriate

## Recommendation

2. Identify funding and donation sources to help the IPU provide medication co-pays (when needed) for prescriptions required by residential programs and haircuts, clothing and personal items to patients to improve patient hygiene and appearance during the residential program selection process. Encourage greater consistency in acceptance of patient placement by contracted board-and-care facilities.

Status

In-Progress

## Key Activities

- Exploring options and resource potentials with Ventura County Health Care Foundation.
- Continued assessment of discharge planning and placement coordination.



## Recommendation

3. Educate service providers who regularly interact with veterans as to the availability of services for veterans. Facilitate direct contact between the veteran and the Veteran Services Office in order to connect the veteran with additional support and services.

## Status

In-Progress

## Key Activities

- Veterans' Affairs Services staff will present at Screening, Triage, Assessment & Referral (STAR), Rapid Integrated Support & Engagement (RISE) & Crisis Team staff meetings on 12/17/20 to discuss availability of services, linkage, etc. to connect veterans as needed.

Long-Term Treatment and  
Case Management

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## Recommendation

4. Identify opportunities to provide veterans and others transportation to services.

## Status

In-Progress

## Key Activities

- Item for discussion at 12/17/20 meeting with staff and Veterans Service Office – Human Services Agency.
- Staff frequently transport clients in County vehicles that have barriers to transportation and need help with reminders to ensure they get to their appointments.
- Staff assist with Gold Coast ACCESS paratransit service to help those that are eligible utilize that resource as well as non-emergency Medi-Cal transport.
- Behavioral Health also contracts with Ventura Transit System to provide transportation services for clients as needed.

Long-Term Treatment and  
Case Management

## Recommendation

5. Review, standardize and streamline the process for creating and filing Tarasoff notifications and Prohibited Persons with Firearms notifications. (A Tarasoff notification occurs when law enforcement is notified by a psychotherapist that a patient has made a credible threat of harm to another person.)

Evaluation only.

Status

Completed – to be implemented 1/1/2021

Key Activities

- VCSO purchased county-wide case management system that tracks individuals with registered firearms and those who are prohibited from possessing a firearm.
- Violations include Tarasoff notification, 5150 holds, other offenses disqualifying possession of firearms
- System will be operational by January 2021

Long-Term Treatment and  
Case Management

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### Recommendation

6. Identify additional methods to communicate and connect with patients, providing appointment reminders, court reminders, and other communications in order to reduce the number of missed appointments and support improved treatment outcomes.

Status

Planned

### Key Activities

- Assessing various options and system are scheduled to be performed

### Recommendation

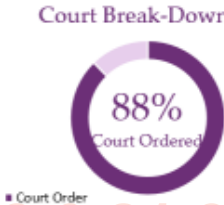
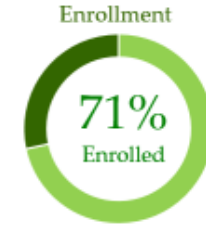
7. Help expand further use of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program, outlined in Laura's Law by engaging in discussion with County Counsel, various County agencies, and relevant community-based organizations to explore appropriate utilization. AOT provides for court intervention to seek to compel compliance with outpatient mental health treatment. Educate all County agencies and relevant service providers about utilization of the AOT program. Expand upon current community outreach efforts in order to build relationships and gain patient compliance with Laura's Law.

### Status

Completed

### Key Activities

- Behavioral Health administration has held a number of stakeholder presentations educating on the AOT process as part of overall substance abuse and mental health services funding.



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- Assist staff participated in 164 community meetings, events, presentations to increase Assist/AOT awareness.
- A total of 2,888 community members are now aware of the Assist/AOT program.

Mental Health Professionals

State hospitals and psychiatric units in general hospitals

Legal System and Judiciary

Law Enforcement and Corrections

Patients, family members, community members

Target Groups

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164 Community Meetings/Events/Presentations

2,888 Community Members/Individuals

# RISE and ASSIST Teams partner to help

- The Rapid Integrated Support & Engagement (RISE) team partners with a multitude of agencies
- The ASSIST team provides assisted outpatient mental health treatment
- One of the benefits of the RISE and Assist teams working closely together is the intensive field based services both teams provide. RISE is able to help the Assist team in locating individuals who may have been referred to Assist, but have not been successful in connecting with Assist. With RISE having connections with law enforcement, and other agencies, it has allowed for the Assist team to foster these same relationships to help in locating potential clients in the community.



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Ongoing Engagement with  
Community-Based  
Organizations and the Public

Recommendation

1. In coordination with the Sheriff's Office, coordinate a public education campaign focused on helping residents keep privately owned firearms secure and increasing awareness of firearms legislation:
  - a. Promote awareness of the Sheriff's firearm disposal service, where unwanted firearms and ammunition can be safely collected and destroyed.
  - b. Promote awareness of free firearm locks, available at multiple Sheriff's Office stations throughout the county.
  - c. Promote awareness of safe firearm handling and storage, focused on preventing unauthorized access or theft.

Status

Completed/On-going

Key Activities

- Gun locks are available at all six patrol locations for any resident. Free firearm locks, firearm disposal and safety tips to be communicated on each press release related to firearms.
- Educational material has been produced SAFE to education homeowners on four basic principles for firearms safety
- The Sheriff's Office has on-going programs that promote firearm safety.
- Planning one-hour in-person basic firearms safety classes focused on households with children. Producing short video for social media platforms.

# Materials on Firearm Safety

## VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



### MEDIA RELEASE

BILL AYUB, SHERIFF  
[www.venturasheriff.org](http://www.venturasheriff.org)



**Nature of Incident:** Gun Safety and Free Gun Locks

**Report Number:**

**Location:** Ventura County Sheriff's Office, Thousand Oaks Police Department, Moorpark Police Department, Camarillo Police Department, Fillmore Police Department and the Ojai Police Department

**Date & Time:** 10/15/2020

**Unit(s) Responsible:** Ventura County Sheriff's Office

**(S)uspects, (V)ictims, (P)arty, (D)ecedent** **City of Residence**

**Narrative:**

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office and all the cities who contract police services with the Sheriff's Office would like to remind community members of the importance of Gun Safety with a simple and useful Gun Safety Tip reminder sheet. Please use the attached information to help keep your home and family as well as your community a safe place.

In addition, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and all of the cities who contract police services with the Sheriff's Office are offering free gun safety locks. Members of the community can come to any listed police department as well as the Sheriff's Office Headquarters station located at the government center to receive free gun safety locks. Remember, Gun Safety is your responsibility!

**Prepared by:** Senior Deputy Mike Baker

**News Release Date:** 10/15/2020

**Media Follow-Up Contact:** Senior Deputy Mike Baker, Camarillo Police Community Resource Unit - 805 388 5131 or [mike.baker@ventura.org](mailto:mike.baker@ventura.org)

## Get a gun, Get a LOCK!



Purchasing a gun means accepting the responsibility that comes along with it, and the smartest way to prevent gun-related accidents is to ensure that firearms are always properly stored in the home.

Store guns where they won't be accessible to unauthorized persons: hiding a gun in a drawer, closet or under a pillow DOES NOT make your house a safer place. Safe storage means using a gun lock or a gun safe.



Your local Sheriff and Police stations have FREE locks available. Just go to your local station and request one. Be a part of keeping your family and community safe by keeping firearms properly secured!

Call your local Police Department or the Ventura County Sheriff's Office for more information



VENTURA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Basic Firearms Safety

**S** – Secure your firearm when not in use

**A** – Access prevention

**F** – Focus on your responsibility as a gun owner

**E** – Educate yourself about gun safety

Gun owners must commit to learning how to safely use their firearms, especially if they plan on using them for home security. The objective is to keep firearms somewhere where they are readily available to the owner, yet inaccessible to others. Keeping a gun to defend your family is meaningless if it just sits on a shelf, putting your family at risk.

- Store guns unloaded.
- Good storage places include in locked cabinets, gun vaults, safes, and storage cases. Stored guns must be inaccessible to children.
- Lock ammunition in a separate location from your guns.
- When removing firearms from storage, double-check to make sure they are not loaded.
- Gun-locking devices render firearms inoperable and serve as an additional precaution against accidents.
- Cable-style locks aren't a substitute for safe storage. They are simply a way to discourage unauthorized access to guns by young children.
- Consider special lockable cases that can be quickly opened by authorized individuals.

If you have children in your household, TEACH them about gun safety:

**NEVER** go snooping for a gun  
**NEVER** touch a gun or let others touch it  
**ALWAYS** tell an adult or ask permission

As a gun owner, you have a responsibility to learn gun safety, and be trained on how to use one. Look for firearms safety classes in your area, take a class and PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE!

For more information you can call your local Police / Sheriff's station

Ongoing Engagement with  
Community-Based  
Organizations and the Public

Recommendation

2. Work with all hospitals in the county to improve the process for reporting 5150/5585 mental health hold information to VCBH so that information is reported in a timely and consistent manner.

Evaluation only.

Status

In Progress

Key Activities

- 5150 training will continue to emphasize the reporting requirements.
- Continue working with Law Enforcement on improving the CIT reporting process.

Ongoing Engagement with  
Community-Based  
Organizations and the Public

### Recommendation

3. Establish a way within the current Sheriff's Office dispatch system to track or categorize calls involving a potential 5150/5585 mental health hold or mental health episode. Encourage all partner law enforcement agencies within the county to begin tracking calls in a similar manner.

Evaluation only.

Status

Completed

### Key Activities

- The Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies track all calls for service, including mental health crisis call. Dispatch system are able to track and retrieve relevant information and communicate in real-time to the responding personnel.
- Conducted a mental health and homeless study, 42,000 contacts represented over 3,400 with mental health component.



Ongoing Engagement with  
Community-Based  
Organizations and the Public

### Recommendation

4. Encourage referrals from the Family Justice Center and law enforcement to VCBH and other mental health service providers in order to connect clients of the Family Justice Center with supportive services.

Evaluation only.

Status

Completed

### Key Activities

- A protocol for referrals to Behavioral Health has been developed and implemented.
- Clients are appropriately identified for referrals to BHD.

## Recommendation

5. Engage the California Community Care Licensing Division to streamline and improve the process of complying with medication paperwork requirements for out-of-county juveniles residing in group homes and board-and-care facilities within Ventura County, supporting the timely provision of medical care.

Evaluation only.

Status

Completed

## Key Activities

- Processes have been put into place to ensure timely identification and provision of medical care for youth from out-of-county.
- Timely access to the JV220 to ensure there are no barriers to service and medication management.

Ongoing Engagement with  
Community-Based  
Organizations and the Public

Ongoing Engagement with  
Community-Based  
Organizations and the Public

Recommendation

6. Empower juveniles and parents to access available resources and follow-up services offered by school districts by promoting information sharing among the juvenile and/or parent, VCMC Emergency Department, and VCOE. Pursue a release of information consent form that the VCMC Emergency Department can share with a juvenile and/or a juvenile's parents before the juvenile is discharged (when brought in on a 5585 mental health hold), authorizing limited information to be shared with VCOE and the juvenile's identified school district, in order to facilitate supportive follow-up activities to be conducted by the school district. Encourage other emergency departments throughout the county to also adopt this process

Status

In-Progress

Key Activities

- VCBH and VCOE reviewed and consulted on protection of health information as it pertains to release of information; explored expansion of discharge planning with consent in place
- VCOE is working with Hospital Association to augment discharge planning language and provide standardized referral back to local School Districts
- VCBH and VCOE added additional Mental Health crisis information to VCOE website

## Recommendation

7. Form a steering committee to guide and monitor implementation and to continue collaborating on best practices and coordination.

## Status

Completed

## Key Activities

- Steering committee has been formed with leadership representation from key agencies involved with the task force report.
- Meetings have been held to review and monitor progress on the task force recommendations and coordinate on implementation.
- Committee has not met recently due to resources dedicated to the COVID-19 response.

Ongoing Engagement with  
Community-Based  
Organizations and the Public