

## Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

September 29, 2022

1. **New Lighted Pickleball and Tennis Courts Being Constructed in Billings** - The Billings Parks and Recreation Department secured additional Land Water Conservation Fund grant funds for the Central Park Tennis Court Replacement project. The funds awarded were \$183,562.50, after administrative charges from the State and Federal Governmental agencies, the net workable capital is \$162,911.72. With this additional funding, Additive Alternate #2 for court lights and Additive Alternate #3 for Fencing sleeving can be accepted as part of the construction bid. By installing lighting, it will extend the play times for Tennis and Pickleball in the spring and fall and even later into the evenings. The fence sleeving will allow containment of the pickleball balls in their courts and at the same time be able to transform the pickleball courts into an additional tennis court for tournament play. When completed, this project will provide Pickleball enthusiasts with an additional four (4) lighted courts in Billings and will bring three (3) additional tennis courts back into the City's court inventory. Approval of these additional funds will appear on the October 10th Council Agenda.
2. **Monthly City County Breakfast** – Mayor Cole, Kevin Iffland and I met with County Commissioner Chair Jones. In addition to our typical conversations regarding the criminal justice system we discussed a growing problem affecting our 911 dispatchers and 1<sup>st</sup> responders. By contract, the city provides dispatch services to all of Yellowstone County except for the City of Laurel. Some parts of our county do not have emergency service responders. This places a tremendous stress on our dispatchers and 1<sup>st</sup> responders when trying to help a 911 caller. We will be bringing this issue to the council in the future with our recommended policy solutions.
3. **Public Works Board Meeting** – The Unified Health Command (UHC) attended Wednesday's PWB meeting. We discussed the impacts of a water shortage on our healthcare providers. We all recognize the incredible work our PW team performed to avoid a catastrophic crisis. We also understand that the long-term solution is well underway with the new reservoir and water plant. However, what steps can be taken in the meantime? Over the past few years, we have had three (3) serious potential interruptions (Flash flood, ice jams and oil spill). The good news is our staff has done excellent work to avoid running out of water, the bad news is, none of these types of disruptions provide any warning. We will continue the dialog with UHC to maximize communications and help each other best weather these challenges.
4. **Substance Abuse Connect** – The attached document was handed out during yesterday's SAC press Conference.
5. **From the PIO Desk:**

WATCH: Billings Fire Department Fire Prevention Week 2022. The Billings Fire Department welcomes visitors for station tours.

[https://youtu.be/v1BQ\\_QMHghc](https://youtu.be/v1BQ_QMHghc)

From BIL: Staffing issues result in long lines at Billings airport

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2385>

9/26/22 city council recap

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2384>

From the HomeFront: Billings delegation

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2386>

## **Billings in the news**

Travelers encouraged to arrive early as staffing shortages cause long lines at Billings airport

[https://www.kulr8.com/news/travelers-encouraged-to-arrive-early-as-staffing-shortages-cause-long-lines-at-billings-airport/article\\_d41b055c-401b-11ed-a6fa-1793d2c5da9e.html](https://www.kulr8.com/news/travelers-encouraged-to-arrive-early-as-staffing-shortages-cause-long-lines-at-billings-airport/article_d41b055c-401b-11ed-a6fa-1793d2c5da9e.html)

Staffing shortages create long lines at Billings airport

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/staffing-shortages-create-long-lings-at-billings-airport>

Staffing issues causing long lines at Billings Airport

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/local-news-2/staffing-issues-causing-long-lines-at-billings-airport/>

Downtown Billings mural remembers those lost to COVID-19

<https://www.ypradio.org/community/2022-09-26/downtown-billings-mural-remembers-those-lost-to-covid-19>

BPD closely monitoring Rims and nearby 'activity'

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/billings-beat/bpd-closely-monitoring-rims-and-nearby-activity/>

New Billings Underpass Avenue project starts in 2023

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/local-news-2/new-billings-underpass-avenue-project-starts-in-2023/>

Construction on major Billings intersection causing backups

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/construction-on-major-billings-intersection-causing-backups>

Billings City Council moves forward on new Heights fire station

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-city-council-moves-forward-on-news-heights-fire-station>

Memory Café creates space and time for those with memory loss

[https://www.kulr8.com/news/memory-caf-creates-space-and-time-for-those-with-memory-loss/article\\_677d1e26-3ec2-11ed-907c-b79b1737267a.html](https://www.kulr8.com/news/memory-caf-creates-space-and-time-for-those-with-memory-loss/article_677d1e26-3ec2-11ed-907c-b79b1737267a.html)

Billings leaders debate whether to fund a low-barrier shelter this winter

[https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/billings-leaders-debate-whether-to-fund-a-low-barrier-shelter-this-winter/article\\_5cdd40b6-3ded-11ed-84e8-8b7207593061.html](https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/billings-leaders-debate-whether-to-fund-a-low-barrier-shelter-this-winter/article_5cdd40b6-3ded-11ed-84e8-8b7207593061.html)

BPD asking public to be careful on Rims

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/billings-beat/bpd-asking-public-to-be-careful-on-rims/>

Billings Montana, meet Billings Missouri: Residents from other Billings build sister city relationship

[https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/billings-montana-meet-billings-missouri-residents-from-other-billings-visit-build-sister-city-relationship/article\\_24847440-3aba-11ed-adda-6f0d1af71b45.html](https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/billings-montana-meet-billings-missouri-residents-from-other-billings-visit-build-sister-city-relationship/article_24847440-3aba-11ed-adda-6f0d1af71b45.html)

Billings to Billings: Group from Missouri visits Montana for sister city talks


<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-to-billings-group-from-missouri-visits-montana-for-sister-city-talks>



# SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONNECT

Uniting Yellowstone County to substantially reduce drug-related crime and addiction through effective prevention, treatment, and diversion





There is no doubt our investment in Substance Abuse Connect is paying off. Most investors are happy with a 10% return on their investment. Our financial investment in the backbone of Substance Abuse Connect has yielded us a 20x return on our investment and resulted in multiple successful pilot projects that have decreased re-arrests and moved frequent utilizers of behavioral health services to stability. In addition:

01 Effective education campaigns have increased the number of parents giving a clear message to their children about drug use and we have seen youth alcohol use decline.

02 We can look at our behavioral health crisis system differently because of joint grants where the partners are collaborating with a third-party evaluator to examine not only program results, but also how people flow through the “system.”

03 A Crisis Line is in place (988), and half of the funds have been secured to launch a Mobile Crisis Response Team.

04 Over \$1 million has been secured to invest in treatment solutions for jail inmates that will improve the transition from jail to the community and prevent re-entry to jail.

This is only the beginning! We have no doubt behavioral health will emerge as our community’s #1 health problem AGAIN, in the upcoming community health needs assessment. It continues to be a #1 problem for law enforcement, the courts, and schools. Substance Abuse Connect provides real hope for real change.

Jonathan McDermott	Billings Clinic
Rich St. John	Billings Police
Greg Upham	Billings School District 2
Chris Kukulski	City of Billings
LeeAnn Bruised Head	Indian Health Services
Lenette Kosovich	Rimrock Foundation
John Felton	RiverStone Health
Jennifer Alderfer	St Vincent Healthcare
Jesse Laslovich	U.S. Attorney for the State of Montana
Don Jones	Yellowstone County
Mike Linder	Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office

# PREVENTION SUCCESSES

## EDUCATION INITIATIVES

### WHEN THE GAME SLOWS DOWN

**Target:** Youth Athletes, Their Parents, Coaches, and Medical Providers

**Content:** This campaign raised awareness about increased opioid addiction and the risks faced by athletes “when the game slows down” due to injury, explaining how access to prescription painkillers coupled with psychological impacts of injury (depression, feelings of disconnect- edness, anxiety) combine to create the risk. The campaign suggested what to watch for and ways for parents, coaches, doctors, and youth to build protection from addiction in the case of a sports injury.



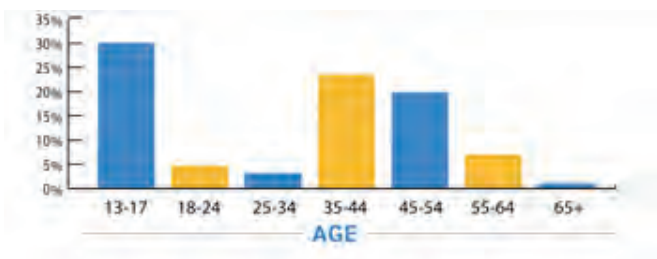
**Impact:** 403,655 impressions with 42,707 engagements reaching about half youth and half adults.

### ONGOING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

**Target:** Youth and Parents

**Content:** Cohesive outreach to parents and youth based on interests and demographic traits. Campaign highlights protective factors and healthy alternatives to alcohol and drug use while framing a positive social norming message that most students make the choice to avoid the dangers and impact of underage drinking and drug use.

**Methodology:** The campaign is developed with input from youth through a partnership with RiverStone Health. To date 23 focus groups with 408 at-risk youth enrolled in “Intervention for Nicotine Dependence” classes, and 68 youth in middle school anti-tobacco clubs:



#### PLATFORMS UTILIZED



**Impact:** 812,147.5 impressions with 56,670 engagements over eighteen months.

## VIRTUAL ASK A THERAPIST

**Target:** Youth and Parents in Billings Public Schools

**Partnership Project:** Suicide Prevention Coalition with backbone support from RiverStone Health, Billings School District #2, and Mental Health Center.

**Methodology:** Facebook Live. Invitations were sent from schools and events were publicized on Facebook. Questions were sought out in advance and coalitions secured therapists to host the night and answer questions posed by parents and students.

**Impact:** 3 Events; 227 attendees; Facebook links received 4,000 hits after the events were done.

227 ATTENDEES  
4,000 ENGAGEMENTS  
WITH FACEBOOK  
CONTENT POSTED  
AFTER THE EVENTS

## READINESS FOR LEGAL RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

**Target:** Businesses, Local Government, Schools, Nonprofits, Recovery Community

**Content:** CO Expert, Ben Cort, customized two-hour training events to prepare audiences for impacts of recreational marijuana.

**Methodology:** Facebook Live Invitations were sent from schools and events were publicized on Facebook. Questions were sought out in advance and coalitions secured therapists to host the night and answer questions posed by parents and students.

**Impact:** Four events with over 150 participants. Training drew on data from other states to prepare participants for client and staff impacts. As a result of these efforts, additional sessions were planned across Montana.

## SCHOOL BASED & CLINICAL PROGRAMMING

### PAX GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME (GBG)

**Target:** Elementary School Teachers, Parents, and Students in all Yellowstone County Elementaries

**Partnership Project:** with Suicide Prevention Coalition housed at RiverStone Health, Mental Health Center, Drug Free Community Grant, Billings School District #2, Billings Catholic Schools, and Lockwood School District.

**Content:** PAX GBG is an evidence-based universal preventive

11,000+  
STUDENTS  
IMPACTED

(EBP) intervention applied by teachers in the classroom. This EBP consists of a set of research-based strategies with origins in behavioral science, neuroscience, and cultural wisdom that operate together to improve children's self-regulation. Teachers then implement these strategies as part of their daily routines in carrying out tasks such as getting students' attention, selecting students for tasks, and transitioning from one task to the next. PAX GBG helps to build children's self-regulation, resulting in improved focus and attention, improved test scores and other academic outcomes, reduced alcohol and other drug use, reduced psychiatric disorders, and reduced suicide.

**Impact:** PAX Good Behavior Game in all elementary schools in the county. Six PAX Tools trainings for parents were held with 78 parents completing training; and PAX Safe Return to School Kits (covid pivot) were distributed to every child K-5 (n=11,250) in PAX schools. Included: PAX Toolcards for parents, Parenting MT information (an initiative of MT DPHHS), mask, and information on how to find resources using MT 211. Parenting Montana saw a 70% increase in website engagement following this initiative.

## HEALTHY SPARK PILOT PROJECT (MAY 2021 – APRIL 2022)

**Target:** Prenatal (weeks 6-40), Postpartum (birth through 3 years), Substance Use Disorder – including: Alcohol, Meth, Opioids, Tobacco, Cannabis

**Partners:** St. Vincent Healthcare Midwifery Clinic, RiverStone Health, Rimrock, GOMO Health.

**Content:** Healthy Spark is a digital therapeutic customized for the perinatal population in Yellowstone County. In this pilot, all patients at the St. Vincent Healthcare Midwifery Clinic were given the option to enroll. Features include one-way informational resources delivered via text and aligned with the age of the patient's child; the ability for a patient to text a keyword to request something specific, including "TALK" which results in a phone call from a Social Worker; wellness checks that automatically escalate to a staff person's attention when responses fall below a certain threshold. Escalations generate an automatic outreach by staff. The program is designed to increase: 1) connection to treatment and wellness plans, 2) engagement with the community, 3) coping skills to manage mental and physical health; 4) Lifestyle independence, 5) mother's attachment to support other than a medical home, 6) flow of information/support to mom between clinic visits, 7) intervention by staff when a mom is escalating toward mental health, substance abuse, or other

282  
ENROLLEES  
43 (15%) IN  
SUD TRACK

**Impact:** In the pilot year, 282 women enrolled, with 43 in track for mothers with Substance Use Disorder; 16,653 messages sent with 92.1% successful delivery rate; 39 escalations resulted in staff outreach. Outcomes are currently being evaluated.

### From 2018 – 2020 Increased Percent of 8th, 10th, 12th Graders Who Report





Half to almost all parents gave a clear message about drug use during the past three months	36.1% to 41.6%
There is moderate to great risk if you take one or two drinks of alcohol nearly every day	60.3% to 64.7%
There is moderate to great risk from binge drinking	72.6% to 78.5%
Friends would feel it is wrong or very wrong for me to have 1 or 2 drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day	60.8% to 74.1%

### From 2017 – 2021 Decreased the Percent of High Schoolers Who Report

Drinking Alcohol in past 30 Days	37.6% to 33.5%
Binge Drinking in past 30 Days	23.2% to 20.9%

The 2020 SAC Action Plan identified clear steps to address gaps in Yellowstone County prevention services.





## SUMMARY

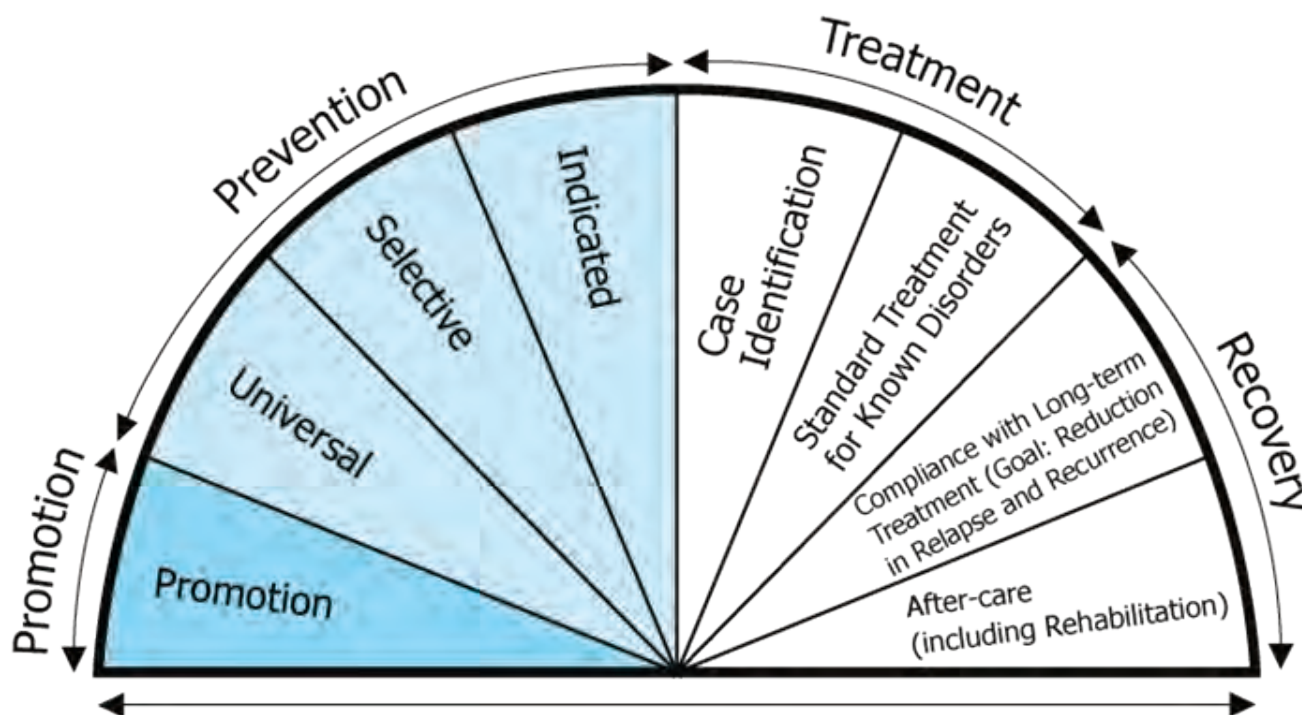
Action Item on Plan	Status	
Align prevention funding		The Mental Health Center and RiverStone co-chaired the Prevention Task Force and aligned their prevention funding to work together on education and PAX. They have mapped prevention funding for the county.
Educate parents and youth		Successful social media campaigns targeting youth and parents, are regularly underway informed by youth focus groups. Parent Toolkit is being developed for distribution online and at events. 'Ask a Therapist' nights for youth and parents are underway. Funding is pending to add 'Ask a Therapist' events; add Facebook Live informational "minis"; and hone a focus on sub-populations at higher risk: American Indian, Hispanic, and LGBTQ.
Educate Businesses: Wake Up Call		Completed successfully.
Educate Businesses: Asynchronous Online Learning		Exploration begun to partner with Missoula on license

<sup>1</sup>MT Department of Health and Human Services: MT Prevention Needs Assessment Yellowstone County Reports.

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control: Youth Risk Behavior Survey Yellowstone County Reports.



Increase Readiness for Legal Marijuana		Completed successfully.
Implement evidence based school programming		PAX is implemented in all Yellowstone County elementary schools. Grant pending for Digital Citizen Academy for SD2 Middle Schools.
Intervene with high risk populations: perinatal		Healthy Spark was developed to reach substance using mothers. The program is currently being evaluated and is ready for expansion.
Intervene with high risk populations: K-12		One campaign completed with youth at high risk for opioid addiction ("When the Game Slows Down"); exploration underway for opportunities.



# TREATMENT & DIVERSION SUCCESSES

## PILOT PROJECTS TO REDUCE RELAPSE AND RE-ARREST

### CASE MANAGEMENT WITH PROBATION & PAROLE

**Target:** Probationer & Parole Clients in Need of Behavioral Health Support

**Content:** The goal was to reduce drug-related recidivism and to move clients toward healthy re-entry. A Rimrock Case Manager was assigned to Probation & Parole to connect clients to supports needed for healthy re-entry such as: behavioral health treatment, peer support, housing, employment, public assistance

**Caveat:** This pilot was implemented at the height of COVID and was greatly impacted. The Region IV Probation & Parole office was closed for the duration of the project, with staff working remotely.

**Impact:** 160 individuals referred. Over half (54%) had primary addiction to meth. Participants experienced a 20% reduction in unemployment; 81% no re-arrests. Project proved that clients benefit from case management services. The MT Department of Corrections recognized the value and will be continuing the project with Region IV Probation & Parole. Case Management to be provided by Alternatives.

Program participants  
with no re-arrests

**81%**

**20%**

reducing in the unemployment  
rate for the co-hort receiving  
referrals to the program

### RECOVERY PATHWAYS (RP) MAY 2021 – APR 2022

**Target:** Started with Drug Court Clients, Expanded to Outpatient and Mental Health

**Partners:** Drug Courts, Rimrock, GOMO Health

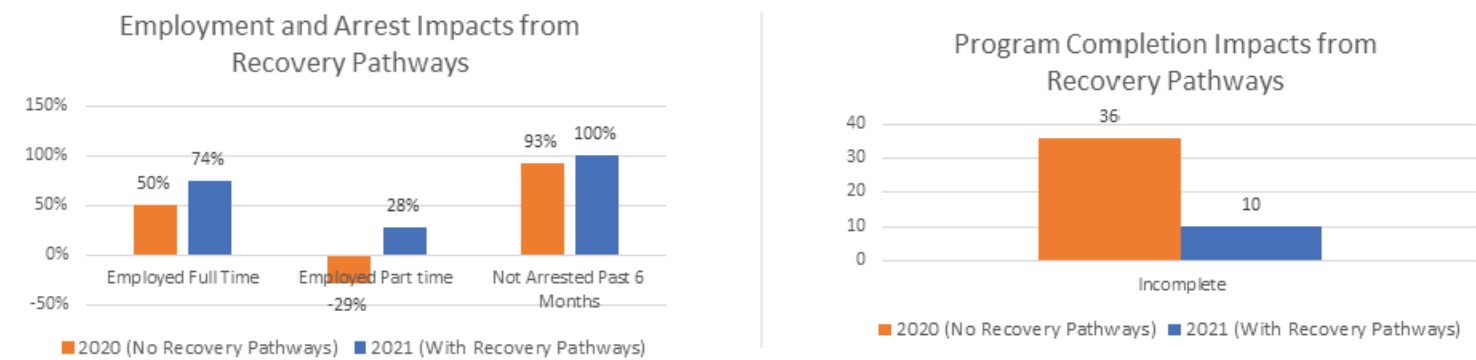
**Content:** The goals were to reduce the drug-related re-arrest and promote long term recovery. In the pilot, all Drug Court clients receiving treatment services at Rimrock were enrolled in RP, a digital therapeutic service customized for this population. The features include, one-way informational texts aligned with program stage, key words to request something specific (including “TALK” which initiates a phone call from a Peer Support Specialist), “escalation” check-ins which automate staff outreach when necessary. With minor staffing adjustment, RP increases:

- ✓ Access to treatment program content outside of office hours.  
(evenings, weekends, after discharge) and upon demand by client.
- ✓ Dosage of treatment program content.
- ✓ Monitoring of escalation ideation or behaviors.
- ✓ Ability for staff to reach out when escalation is underway.
- ✓ Ability for clients to reach out for customized support when they need it.

#### 362 Enrolled

- 270 Drug Court
- 75 Outpatient
- 9 Mental Health
- 8 Loved Ones
- Also in a Parenting
- Track: 128
- 741 Escalations
- 44,969 Messages

**Impact:** This program has been effective in reducing “incompletion,” increasing employment, and decreasing the percentage of re-arrests. At a time when, mental illness and substance use was dramatically increasing both locally and nationally, the clients in this program held steady or improved when compared to clients in 2020 who did not have RP. The program is sustained at Rimrock and was expanded to their outpatient and mental health programs.



## INCREASE EFFICACY OF CRISIS PREVENTION AND CRISIS CARE

### CRISIS DIVERSION GRANT (FORMERLY COUNTY TRIBAL MATCHING GRANT)

**Target:** Individuals in Behavioral Health Crisis

**Partners:** Yellowstone County Alternatives (grantee), Community Crisis Center, HomeFront, Rimrock, Montana Rescue Mission

**Content:** CTMG funding aims to provide the most effective, lowest-cost services to individuals in a behavioral health crisis. The goals are to decrease admissions to the State Hospital, jail, corrections, and emergency rooms and hospitals. The Yellowstone County grant provides part of the funding for 1) twenty-four-hour crisis stabilization and 24/7 law enforcement drop-off at the community crisis center; 2) transition support to prevent escalation to a crisis in two populations: justice-involved individuals and homeless individuals. These include housing support, education, transportation, and other items required to stabilize individuals in the community and prevent their entry or re-entry to high-cost crisis care or the criminal justice system.

Diversion Success: Jul 1, 2021 – Jun 30, 2022 ( Preliminary Data )	
Diverted from ED	1319
Diverted from Hospitalization	1036
Diverted from Montana State Hospital	397
Diverted from jail	1010

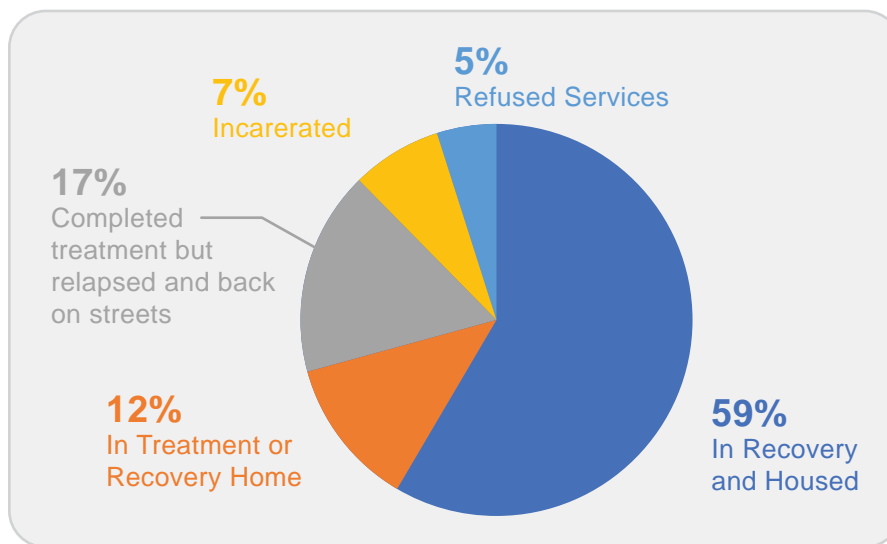
**Impact:** The annual evaluation of this program is currently being conducted. Preliminary data are noted in the table above.

## HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAM (HOT) || COSSAP GRANT

**Target:** Transients and Others in Behavioral Health Crisis

**Partners:** Downtown Billings Alliance MAAP Program, Billings Police, Rimrock

**Content:** This grant provided funds to pilot a form of mobile crisis outreach. Licensed Peer Support Specialists from Rimrock were assigned to the downtown MAAP program to ride along with the police. Police were able to hand off management of behavioral health crises to these professionals. The program is continuing and will eventually be integrated into city-wide Crisis Response Units.



**Aug 2021 - May 2022**  
**171 clients served**  
**38 (22%) Chronic Transients**

**Impact:** 171 clients seen by HOT from Aug 2021 – April 2022. Of these, one fifth (22%) were chronic transients. Preliminary outcomes for chronic transients are in the pie chart. Preliminary outcomes for the other 133 are anticipated by end of July.

## CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT (CRU)

**Target:** Individuals in Behavioral Health Crises Anywhere in Billings

**Content:** The goals are to decrease the amount of time police and fire spend on behavioral health calls and to increase effective behavioral health intervention in the field. SAC mobilized Billings Police, Fire Department, Dispatch, Sheriff's Department, Community Crisis Center, and Rimrock to develop a plan for a co-responder mobile team. The team completed a plan including staff job descriptions, policies and procedures, and budgeting. The group had a consensus and had secured half the funding to move the project forward. It was hoped City Council would provide the additional \$200,000 to implement for the next year (with majority funding to come from Rimrock). The City Council did not approve this, so

implementation of CRU is delayed and it is uncertain if the plan developed by SAC partners will be by the Council. In the co-responder model, city and nonprofits must partner.

## JUST GETTING STARTED

### COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH MILL LEVY GRANT

**Target:** Individuals in Behavioral Health Crisis Who are at Risk for Justice-Involvement.

**Partners:** Yellowstone County (Grantor), Community Crisis Center, Continuum of Care, Downtown Billings Alliance, Montana Rescue Mission, United Way 211/Crisis Line

**Content:** This grant has four goals:

1. Provide behavioral health intervention for the population most likely to disrupt public safety and at high risk for recidivism.
2. Identify habitual users of social/clinical service and a plan to significantly reduce the number of their "re-entries" into crisis programs and/or the criminal justice system.
3. Facilitate effective hand-offs from law enforcement to behavioral health crisis support and from behavioral health crisis support to supportive services.
4. Track the outcomes quarterly (see page 2) and report de-identified data to the Board of County Commissioners.

**Impact:** An external third-party Evaluator has been secured to measure outcomes. Over time, it is anticipated this funding will increase the time law enforcement can spend on crime (decrease time spent on behavioral health); increase the rate of clients moving successfully across programs from crisis to stabilizations; reduce recidivism rates of individuals within the crisis system, and save costs due to diversion from higher levels of crisis care.

### JAIL TREATMENT: PROGRAMMING STARTS SEPTEMBER 2022

**Target:** Inmates of Yellowstone County Detention Center with SUD or Mental Health diagnoses.

**Partners:** Yellowstone County Detention Facility, Community Health Partners, Ideal Options, Alternatives, Rimrock, Y.C. Attorney







**Content:** Two grants have been secured for Yellowstone County Detention Facility, totaling about \$880,000 for one year. Both focus on the services provided by community partners, and take into account space, staff, and safety restrictions of our current facility. The intent is to reduce relapse, and re-arrest for drug and mental health related causes, by providing effective treatment and transitional supports upon re-entry to the community.



**Impact: Start Date is Sep 1. JG Research & Evaluation will be the third party evaluator.**

The 2020 SAC Action Plan identified clear steps to address gaps in Yellowstone County behavioral health services.

## SUMMARY

Action Item on Plan	Status	
Create a community crisis line		988 coming on line July 15.
Create a mobile crisis response team		Secured funds and partners for effective pilot which is underway; led planning efforts to expand city-wide. Plan complete.
Improve transition of substance users to shelter/housing		Secured funds and partners for effective pilot with chronic transients and increased transition support funding for the homeless and justice-involved individuals by \$200,000. Evaluation underway.
Increase capacity of jail to support successful interdiction and treatment		Led planning and secured over \$1.2 million for September programming start.
Increase capacity of drug courts to support successful interdiction and treatment		Secured funds and partners to develop and pilot Recovery Pathways. This program increased program completion; decreased re-arrest; and boosted employment. Program is sustained through Rimrock.
Pilot project to provide effective treatment to probationers		Secured funds and partners to implement pilot project with Region IV Probation & Parole. Successful project increased employment and decreased re-arrest. Program is sustained by Department of Corrections.

