



Timothy Montoya Task Force | Meeting Nine

August 9, 2023

Overview

This meeting was an opportunity for task force members to engage around three main areas. The goal was for members to collaborate on refining each of these areas of study and addressing associated challenges. The mentioned topics stem from previous conversations. Concerns and challenges related to these areas will be included in the report. The process acknowledges the absence of unanimous agreement and the team is committed to capturing dissenting views in the report.

Task force members self-selected into breakout groups based on topics. Facilitators and note-takers assisted each group's discussion. The goal was to generate ideas that will contribute to the report. After group discussions and a large group reflection, a vote was taken to gauge overall agreement to move forward and to ensure general alignment on the captured buckets of interventions.

While acknowledging the need for resources for these interventions, the conversation won't currently delve into this aspect or let it hinder discussions. The intention is to avoid using potential resource constraints as a barrier to exploring the feasibility and details of implementing the interventions. The focus remains on understanding what these interventions would involve and identifying possible gaps and challenges.

Breakout Groups: Response/Absconder Units, Standardized Policy Response Manual and Intermediate Placements

Group One: Response/Absconder Unit

The first group focused on further development of an "absconder unit" or "recovery response unit." The group focused on various aspects of the unit's functioning and implementation. The group aimed to keep financial considerations separate for now and instead focused on key components of the unit. They touched on the challenges of deciding on a uniform response that accounts for various jurisdictions and sizes. They emphasized the need for training and communication within the unit, highlighting the importance of an individualized response for each runaway youth. They considered using assessment tools and a multi-disciplinary approach to engage with youth in a trauma-informed way. The idea of an MOU to facilitate collaboration among service providers and agencies was discussed. Challenges around jurisdictional acceptance and strategy for implementation were recognized, especially in terms of getting different jurisdictions to buy into the concept. The group also mentioned discussions around when more forceful action might be taken versus less forceful approaches, considering the diverse reactions of youth who run away from care. The focus of this conversation was on creating a unique and effective response unit that ensures the safety and appropriate response after a youth runs away from care, based on specific criteria and context.



Group Two : Standardized Response Manual

The second group discussed the development of a standardized policy response manual. They focused on immediate and decisive notifications for various entities when responding to youth who run away from care, including law enforcement, county departments of human services, parents or guardians and the institution where the child was located. The standardized response would not prescribe specific actions but would ensure key parties are informed and could trigger legal processes and connections to services. They considered the need for uniform notifications while understanding that responses might differ based on the circumstances. They discussed having a decision tree and standardized assessment tools to guide response levels and risk assessment for each child. The group also explored expanding MOU requirements with local partners to enhance collaboration, particularly between human services and law enforcement. The potential integration of mobile crisis resources into interventions was also considered.

Group Three: Intermediate Placements

Group three focused on the topic of intermediate placements for youth who are recovered after they run away from care. They discussed the gap in the continuum of care and the lack of resources to address this specific need. They mentioned historical solutions like receiving homes and acute treatment units (ATUs) that were once available but have since disappeared due to changes in regulations and policies. They also mentioned that the available placements are insufficient to meet the demand; one existing program is always fully utilized, indicating the necessity for such services. The group highlighted the importance of addressing this gap and providing a range of options for placements. They recognized that the response should be individualized and tailored to each child's circumstances. They considered the perspective of county representatives who highlighted situations where children run from facilities and lose their placement or refuse to return, leading to the need for different options. The group leaned towards creating a family resource pavilion program, incorporating an assessment component specifically tailored for runaways and their unique needs. The assessment would guide the placement of the child in the most suitable setting. They believed that existing models could serve as a foundation for this type of program and suggested that the next steps could involve the Colorado Department of Human Services issuing an RFP to develop and run the proposed program. The group contemplated the possibility of running a pilot program covering both rural and urban areas to address different challenges in each setting. The overall takeaway was that there's a significant gap in the continuum of care, and adequate funding would be essential to incentivize providers to create the necessary resources.

House Bill 22-1056 was discussed. This bill addressed licensed temporary shelter care, and may providing a potential framework for the intermediate placement solution. The group highlighted that the need for such placements is recognized, but the critical factor is adequate funding. While a temporary shelter care provision exists for up to five nights, the initial funding allocation was insufficient for comprehensive development. The group emphasized that while there's existing legislation, the core challenge is securing the necessary funding for implementation and sustainability. They acknowledged the importance of highlighting the unique challenges and financial considerations in the report, indicating the complexity of addressing funding issues effectively. The



focus on funding underscores the report's need to outline the "how," "at what level," and "for what" regarding financial support.

Large Group Discussion

Task force members took a vote to gauge the group's interest in continuing to study and develop these three areas.

Abseconder/Response Unit and Intermediate Placement – The majority of members voted to continue developing the concept. Dennis Desparrois and Brandon Miller expressed interest in having the idea fleshed out more before voting yes. Elizabeth Montoya and Becky Miller Updike expressed concerns about funding and resource allocation, which was put on pause until the concepts were prioritized. The task force agreed that the vote is about continuing the conversation and pursuing the concept of the recovery unit, even though it's not fully developed. The focus is on shaping the idea and building momentum for further discussions in the coming year of the task force's work.

Standardized Policy Response - The majority of members voted to continue developing the concept. Dennis abstained because it would be his job to implement so it is important that he remain neutral.