



## Public Safety Action Plan – Items of Note for Workplace Violence Initiatives

### BACKGROUND:

Alaska has been undergoing quite a bit of change in recent years. Given the opioid epidemic, recession, and many systemic overhauls in public services some have called it 'the perfect storm' in regard to crime rates that have been on the rise for the past few years. In October 2017 the State of Alaska released a '[Public Safety Action Plan](#)' in response.

Some of the items in the ten page plan might be of value to ASHNHA's Workplace Violence Task Force members and the efforts to reduce violence. Of note, item **40** directly states 'Approach hospitals about opening more designated evaluation and treatment beds to increase capacity and improve availability of acute care mental health treatment and evaluation beds at Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) (DHSS)'.

Items number **10 & 20** show the Administration plans to seek funding for 2 more prosecutors in Anchorage, 1 for Kotzebue, and 1 for Bethel. Item **19** could greatly benefit ASHNHA members as the Administration plans to educate local public safety partners about processes and standards for evidence to enable state prosecution of crimes investigated by local agencies. This is important as the need for evidence/witnesses is directly tied to underreporting issues that hospitals face and is where known miscommunications have taken place in the past with staff and law enforcement. Further, the plan highlights the need for treatment, a renewed look at title 47 holds, stakeholder meetings to discuss the civil commitment process, and many other topics that could impact ASHNHA members if implemented.

### **Below is a list of some of the items in the Public Safety Action Plan that may impact Workplace Violence Task Force initiatives:**

7. Develop and improve tools and processes for sharing data and information among law enforcement agencies, including:
  - a. Develop interfaces to connect various agency databases;
  - b. Consider policy requiring DPS reports to be completed within 48 hours; and
  - c. Improve availability of the Alaska Records Management System.

- 10.** Seek funding for more 2 more prosecutors in Anchorage given increased demand from record number of homicides. (LAW)
- 14.** Identify law enforcement presence in each community and develop a communications plan to improve coordination among state and local authorities. (LAW, DPS)
- 15.** Increase trooper presence and improve response times in rural areas by:
  - a. Revising travel restrictions to allow more law enforcement trips to rural Alaska for non-emergency policing and building relationships with rural community residents;
  - b. Improving transportation and logistics coordination in rural areas (i.e., sharing pilots, aircraft, and boats among state agencies);
  - c. Filling trooper vacancies; and
  - d. Exploring possibility of a consolidated communications center with regional dispatch centers to provide more reliable emergency communication services. (DPS)
- 19.** Educate local public safety partners about processes and standards for evidence to enable state prosecution of crimes investigated by local agencies. (LAW)
- 20.** Add prosecutors in rural Alaska (1 for Kotzebue, 1 for Bethel). (LAW)
- 27.** Improve retention and recruitment of troopers, VPSOs, and pilots. (DPS)
- 28.** Assign an aircraft to the Nome trooper post and update other aircraft. (DPS)
- 31.** Restore staffing of prosecutor's offices in Northwest Alaska. (LAW)
- 32.** Evaluate Washington State's model for arrest diversion of low-level misdemeanors. (DPS)
- 36.** Explore other opportunities to deploy telecommunications resources to improve access to services, potentially including remote probation supervision, out-patient treatment, and parenting assistance in Child in Need of Aid cases.
- 38.** Continue interagency coordination to allocate reinvestment funding.
- 39.** Continue and expand crisis intervention training for law enforcement. (DPS)

- 40.** Propose ongoing stakeholder meetings to discuss the civil commitment process and options for improving the state psychiatric emergency system. (DHSS, LAW)
- 41.** Approach hospitals about opening more designated evaluation and treatment beds to increase capacity and improve availability of acute care mental health treatment and evaluation beds at Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). (DHSS)
- 42.** Legislation to authorize courts orders requiring DOC to hold people who are intoxicated when they are arrested until they are sober.
- 43.** Evaluate current use of Title 47 safety net for individuals incapacitated due to substance abuse until a better long-term solution is found.
- 44.** Evaluate ways to increase availability of treatment resources for outpatient services.
- 45.** Evaluate how to incentivize treatment on demand so services are available when needed.
- 46.** Evaluate turning Palmer jail into a restorative justice facility, such as a mental health and substance abuse evaluation and treatment facility.
- 47.** Pursue an exemption from the federal institute for mental disease rule limiting how many beds a provider can operate for residential substance abuse disorder treatment. (DHSS)
- 48.** Increase and improve services for children who need institutional care, including increasing the number of beds at treatment facilities like API. (DHSS)
- 49.** Develop a standardized system for evaluating and treating non-restorable patients and explore possibility of releasing some patients subject to around-the-clock monitoring to reduce costs and open rooms for other patients at API. (DHSS)
- 50.** Develop long-term strategy for Title 47 holds. (ACJC discussing)
- 51.** Evaluate possible legislative or administrative options to ensure timely competency hearings. (LAW)
- 52.** Establish a clear system for persons who have been civilly committed for involuntary inpatient psychiatric treatment to give up their guns before returning home. (DHSS)
- 54.** The State continues to execute the Strategic Plan for Responding to the Opioid Crisis and evaluate further measures to combat opioid abuse, including: expanding treatment capacities at existing facilities and recovery networks; improving access to group recovery in prisons; providing tools and resources to “second chance employers”;

expanding drug take-back programs; increasing security measures to prevent importation of opioids on bush airlines, airports, ferries, etc.; funding public and provider education campaigns; fund distribution of overdose education materials and naloxone kits to first responders.

**56.** Increase state resources directed at catching and prosecuting drug traffickers, including:

- a. Create a statewide drug prosecutor position (LAW)
- b. Add drug dogs to assist in disrupting the drug trade and catch traffickers  
(DPS, DOT)

**57.** Seek a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area designation to increase availability of federal funds for drug investigations. (DPS)

## References

State of Alaska Department of Law. (2017, October 30). *Public Safety Action Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://law.alaska.gov/pdf/admin/PublicSafetyActionPlan.pdf>