

Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Manchester commissioned a study in 2014 to determine the reasons Manchester seemingly had, by far, a much higher incidence of Emotionally Disturbed Person (EDP) calls for Police than East Hartford or West Hartford. In addition, Manchester had had some difficult experiences with some group homes and wanted that issue, and its relationship to Town services, looked at as well. The Mayor subsequently appointed a task force to discuss the study, the mental health related calls, and, make recommendations. Those recommendations are embodied in Proposed Bill 5618.

The attached graphics (Exhibits A and B) show the dramatic uptick in handling of folks with mental health issues in both our Police Department and Senior, Adult and Family Services Department. The rise coincides with the introduction of “money follows the person” as a State policy for reintroducing people with certain challenges into community settings.

The “money follows the person” effort is well intended. The Task Force proposes a review of the criteria that must be met for placement in a community setting. When someone refuses some or all the fine services the State offers as support, it falls to various Emergency Services to respond to needs. This doesn’t have to occur for too many people for it to be a real strain on EMS staffing, for example.

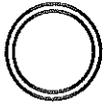
This testimony includes as an attachment (Exhibit C) specific training that the Task Force believes is appropriate for all people working with people with mental health issues in institutions or residential settings.

Manchester’s Task Force does not oppose “money follows the person” but believes stronger standards need to be applied. Also a municipal liaison from the appropriate agency must first be in place to effectively coordinate.

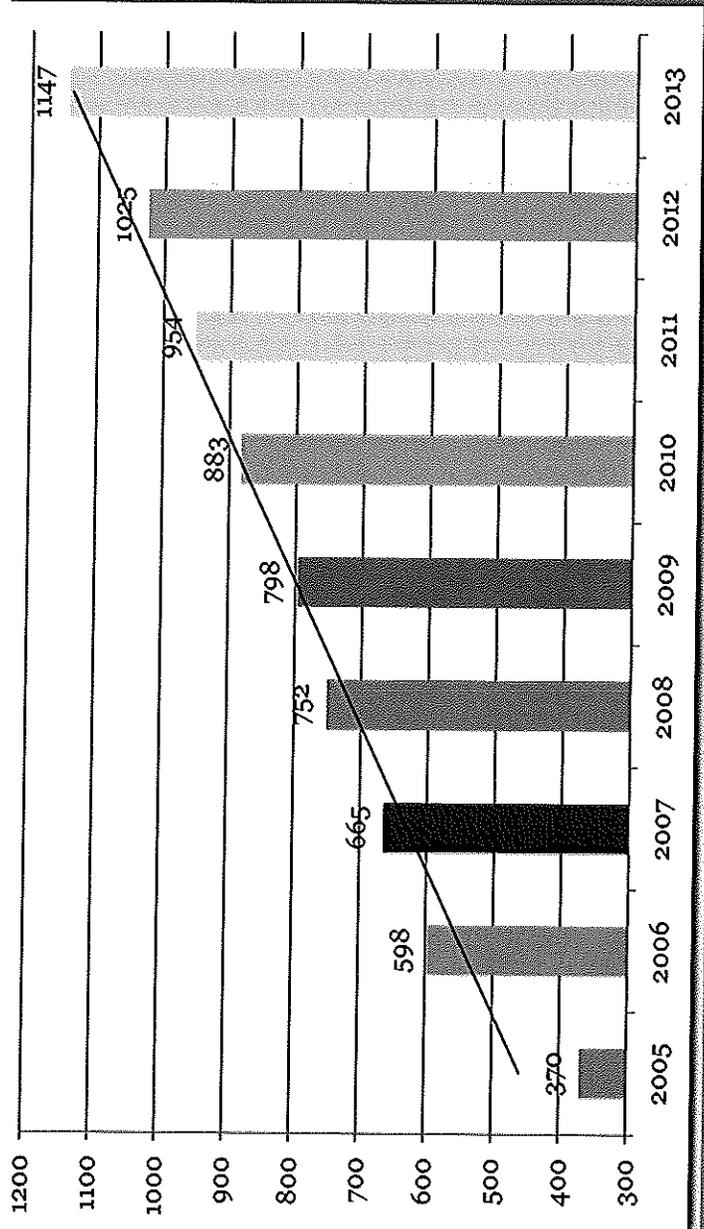
Community Based Residential Facilities

Also part of the Task Force discussion is data similar to a State Study by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) in May of 2014, which shows the disproportionate number of community based

History



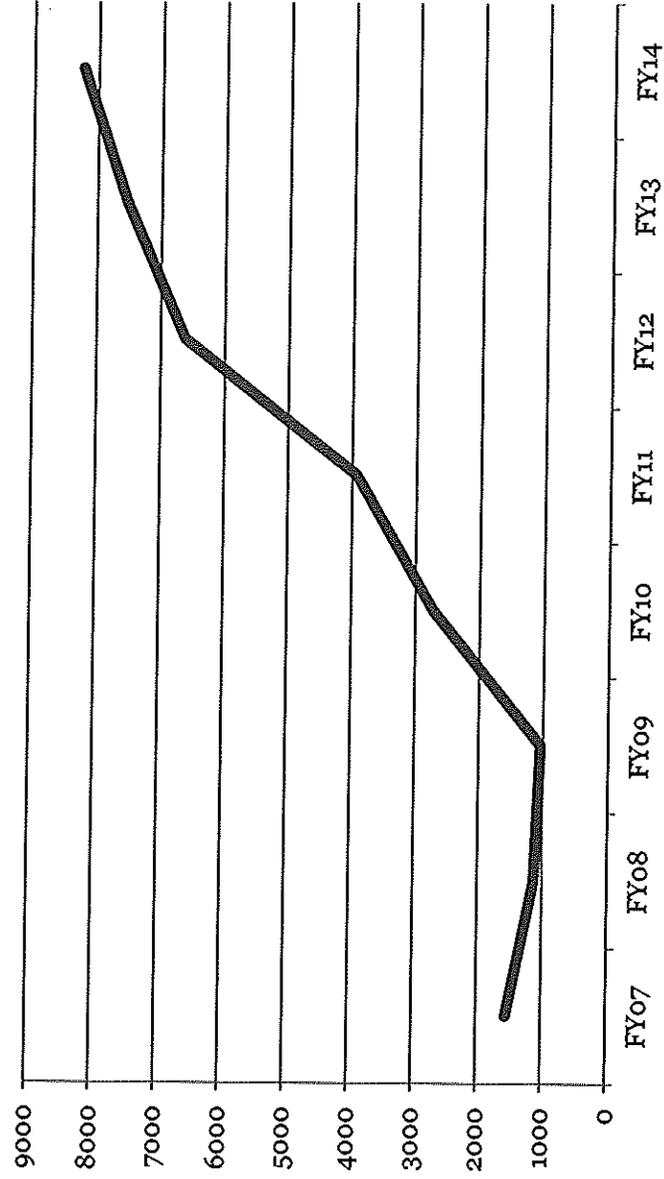
- The Police Department has tracked these calls since 2005.
- The increase from 2005 to 2013 is **210%** for the police department alone.



Manchester Senior, Adult & Family Services



Resident Contacts Presenting With Mental Health Issues



TOWN OF MANCHESTER

INTEROFFICE MEMO

To: Scott Shanley
General Manager

From: Mary Roche Cronin
Director of Human Services

Date: January 23, 2015

Re: Mayor's Task Force Recommendation for Training of Mental Health Staff

One of the recommendations made by members of the Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health Needs in Manchester is that mental health staff, particularly in facilities, must receive training so as to provide the best care for individuals with mental health needs. In our discussions on the task force, as well as discussion that took place in the original committee looking at mental health needs in Manchester, we found that training for mental health staff is inconsistent. This lack of training has resulted in unnecessary calls to police, fire and EMS services.

Task Force recommends the additional training of employees in several areas. The Task Force understands that core competencies and skills are not only required and necessary to perform job responsibilities at the highest level but necessary as the demands and requirements change in each position. Ongoing employee training ensures that professional standards are maintained.

In addition to each agency's general orientation for all new employees, the Task Force recommends the minimum additional training of milieu and residential support employees on the following topics:

- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Introduction to Mental Health Training
- Program/site safety measures and environment
- Specific age-related training to the population of the residential program, such as:
 - Introduction to the Population and Developmental Stages
 - Developing Effective Treatment Relationships with the Population
 - Understanding Trauma and Its Effects on the Population
 - Assessing Risk Behaviors with the Population

The original committee developed a training course that addresses these topics and, if funding were obtained, could be offered free-of-charge to any interested mental health staff in Manchester. To that end, we have partnered with North Central Regional Mental Health Board to apply for a H. Louise Ruddell Charitable Fund grant. Additionally, a "train-the-trainer" component would also be offered so that facilities could sustain the training in-house. We will continue to look for other funding if we are not successful in obtaining the Ruddell grant.