Costs & Outcomes of a Pre-arrest Deflection Program to Combat Opioid Misuse

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Opioid Epidemic

• According to the CDC, in April 2021, drug overdose deaths in the U.S. exceeded 100,000 for the prior 12-month period. This is a 28.5% increase from the preceding 12-month period. (https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2021/20211117.htm)

• Arizona experienced a 32% increase in reported drug overdose deaths between January of 2020 and January 2021 (CDC, 2022).

• Pima County had 498 drug overdose deaths in 2021 (Pima County Health Department, 2022). This is a 12% increase from 2020 and a 48% increase from 2019.
  • 71% of the drug overdose deaths in 2021 involved an opiate compound.
The Department-wide Deflection Program Overview:

**Goal 1:**
Enhance and expand access to substance abuse treatment

**Goal 2:**
Improve well-being, decrease opioid and other substance misuse and related risk behavior

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**TPD Deflection Program:**
Deflection “Angel” Program

**Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery Support Services**
(CODAC & other providers)

**Well-being**
Substance misuse & recidivism
Related Risk Behaviors

**Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

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**Department-wide Deflection Program Overview**

- TPD Deflection Program: Deflection “Angel” Program
- Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery Support Services (CODAC & other providers)
- Well-being, Substance misuse & recidivism, Related Risk Behaviors
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation
Feasibility & Acceptability: Expanding Access to Treatment & Services

**TPD Deflection Program – 1st 3 years (Nov 1 2018 - Oct 31, 2021)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interactions involving encouragement to engage in treatment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deflections</td>
<td>2,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Angel&quot; Program</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,192</strong></td>
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- **45%** Individual transported immediately to treatment provider.
- **21%** Individuals agreed to seek treatment on their own.
- **2%** Deflection accepted, but individual arrested for pre-existing warrant.
- **1%** Deflection accepted; result unknown.
- **<1%** Individual already in treatment.
- **29%** Individual did not agree to deflection to treatment.
On average, deflection incidents took 48.5 minutes, whereas arrest incidents took 73.9 minutes.

The time difference translates to an average cost savings of $13.40 per incident related to officer time, a total saving of $28,529 across all 2,129 deflection incidents.
Deflection Program Potential Cost Savings

If 20% (426) of the 2,129 deflection incidents would have resulted in one night in jail if not for the Deflection Program, then the Deflection Program would have saved the local justice system $48,564.

Potential cost savings of $48,564 in jail housing expenses.

If 10% (213) of the 2,129 deflections would have resulted in conviction of charges if not for the Deflection Program, then the Deflection Program would have saved the local justice system $601,512.

Potential cost savings of $601,512 in justice system expenses.
Deflected Individual Treatment & Service Engagement

Of the 922 unique individuals connected to a treatment provider as a result of TPD’s Deflection Program, 789 (86%) were connected with the primary partnering treatment provider – CODAC.

Of these 789 individuals:

• **558 (71%)** received at least one type of healthcare service from CODAC.
• **527 (67%)** completed the clinical intake assessment at CODAC.
• **352 (45%)** engaged in some kind of substance misuse treatment at CODAC.
Longitudinal Research Study

- Individuals invited to participate in a longitudinal study
- 3 comparison groups
  - Deflected
  - Arrested for illegal substance-related charge
  - Self-referred for opioid use disorder and appropriate for medication-assisted treatment
- Survey data collected via researcher-led interviews at
  - time of deflection, arrest, or self-referral
  - 3 months post incident
  - 6 months post incident
Deflection was associated with a greater reduction in frequency of use of illegal drugs. As shown, at 6 months post incident, individuals who were deflected engaged in 6.6 fewer days of illegal drug use than those who had been arrested.
Deflected individuals had more positive perceptions of police.

Deflection, vs. arrest, had the most positive impact on perceived attitudes related to substance use and mental health issues and the least positive impact on general attitudes towards the police.
Yes to Deflection to Avoid Arrest?
Impact of Deflection on Perceived Police Pressure or Coercion

Among individuals who have OUD and are appropriate for MAT, those who were deflected reported a significantly greater amount of perceived police pressure and coercion to stop or reduce drug misuse than those who self-referred to substance misuse treatment.
Although deflected and self-referred individuals were motivated to engage in substance misuse treatment, deflected individuals were more motivated in terms of problem recognition, pressures for treatment, and recognized treatment needs.
Officer implementing the Deflection Program are accurately identifying individuals who are motivated to engage in treatment and services. Deflected individuals are motivated to engage in treatment and services at similar levels compared to individuals who self-refer to substance misuse treatment.
Discussion

Barriers to Pre-Arrest Deflection Implementation

• Evaluation can reduce barriers:
  • Stigma – Evaluation can reduce stigmatizing myths and beliefs regarding criminogenic behavior
  • Belief that services available through jail and court are more effective
  • Belief that community members would simply use deflection to avoid arrest
  • Provide another option to officers to use at their discretion, with supporting evidence

• Process evaluation extremely beneficial for new initiatives such as this
• Efficiency evaluation provides a perspective on fiscal responsibility
• Impact evaluation provides tangible results for cops, executives, and community
• Provides direction for future research on alternative responses, organizational culture, individual police decision-making, etc.
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