

Mayoral directive 2023-02: Behavioral health

The City of Everett is facing an ongoing behavioral health crisis. The number of people living with untreated substance use disorders and severe mental health conditions continues to grow, all while the resources available to support them have not been able to keep up.

Untreated behavioral health conditions can make it very difficult for individuals to manage their day to day lives, including maintaining healthy relationships, employment, a safe place to live and other essential components of adult life. For the community, it can be equally challenging and even frightening to encounter individuals that are displaying erratic and sometimes threatening behavior on the street. Residents and business owners throughout the city, especially in the downtown core, have expressed frustrations and concerns about damage to store fronts, drug paraphernalia left in the alleyways and more.

Over the past few years, city leadership has worked to increase access to behavioral health services and the Community Outreach and Enforcement Team has continued their work at the street level providing support and resource navigation help. While those struggling with these serious conditions are sometimes also unsheltered, the challenges of untreated behavioral health conditions and homelessness are wholly separate issues that need separate solutions.

Addressing our local behavioral health crisis will require a compassionate approach that provides support and accountability. As a city and as a community, we should have empathy for those who are suffering. At the same time, residents, visitors and business owners deserve to feel safe anytime and anywhere in Everett.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Cassie Franklin, mayor of Everett, hereby direct City of Everett staff to pursue the following four initiatives:

1. Initiative 1: Develop and implement new strategies to compassionately address the local behavioral health crisis.

- a. Partner with local governmental agencies and substance use disorder non-profits and treatment clinics to identify current treatment options and the pathways to access, with focus on historically underserved communities.
- b. Support County and State-led work to preserve, restore and establish additional behavioral health facilities and increase the number of behavioral health providers.
- c. Work with local partners to determine the most effective and impactful ways to use funds received from the opioid distributors' settlement for treatment, including participation in the Opioid MAC group and exploring partnerships regionally.
- d. Alongside our state and regional partners, explore the creation of additional pathways to treatment, including the establishment of a crisis stabilization center.
- e. Develop and distribute resources for businesses and residents, based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, to reduce/ remove the opportunity for crime at their location and encourage more positive use.

2. Initiative 2: Support legislative and policy changes that address the multitude of behavioral health needs in our city.

- a. Advocate to increase funding for behavioral health services, including treatment, expanding co-response units, creating alternate response teams and navigation systems to better connect people in crisis with needed services.
- b. Support solutions that address the gap between competency and involuntary commitment for behavioral health related issues to ensure individuals receive the services they need.
- c. Continue work with the Mayors and Business Leaders for Public Safety coalition to develop innovative and strategic policies to address the publics' and business owners' concerns about public safety, including supporting a fix to the Blake Decision that will allow law enforcement to intervene more proactively and encourage voluntary treatment options.
- d. Develop new strategies and legal tools to address the concerns businesses and residents have regarding the violence and crimes that often occur because of untreated substance use disorder.



3. Initiative 3: Expand the City’s embedded social worker program to provide additional mental health and service navigation support to the community.


- a. Launch the pilot program that embeds social workers into the Fire and Library departments to provide mental health and service navigation support.
- b. Develop and launch a new application for care coordination and tracking for use by multiple city departments, starting with Police, Fire, Community Development and the Library.
- c. Develop a plan to get individuals that are living with substance use disorder into treatment and connected with their family and/or other support systems.

4. Initiative 4. Advance the important work local behavioral health service providers and organizations are doing to address the behavioral health crisis.

- a. Work with local behavioral health service providers and organizations to identify the gaps in the current behavioral health system and support, promote and advocate for the growth and capacity building of service providers and organizations.
- b. Support and partner with local behavioral health service providers and organizations to better inform the community on the pathways that exist to access treatment.

A report summarizing progress on these initiatives, as well as metrics that will be used to gauge impact and success, will be delivered to me twice per year.

Dated this 9th day of March 2023



Cassie Franklin
Mayor, City of Everett

