Written Testimony In Support of 2SSB 5311, Crisis Intervention Training

Seth Dawson, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Washington)  
sethdawson@att.net 360-754-3290

As documented in the studies cited and summarized below, there are positive fiscal considerations associated with Crisis Intervention Training – particularly in terms of reduced:

*psychiatric hospitalizations,
*inpatient referrals from jails,
*jail bookings/time served,
*police officer and citizen injuries,
*police time spent per incident, and
*SWAT responses

Although not covered by these studies, civil liability prevention is definitely another fiscal advantage in properly training law enforcement for these kinds of incidents.


Costs and savings associated with implementation of a police crisis intervention team.

El-Mallakh PL¹, Kiran K¹, El-Mallakh RS¹.

Author information

¹From the College of Nursing, University of Kentucky, Lexington, and the Mood Disorders Research Program, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Louisville School of Medicine, Louisville, Kentucky.

Police crisis intervention teams (CIT) have demonstrated their effectiveness in reducing injury to law enforcement personnel and citizens and the criminalization of mental illness; however, their financial effect has not been fully investigated. The objective of the study was to determine the total costs or total savings associated with implementing a CIT program in a medium-size city.
METHODS:
The costs and savings associated with the implementation of a CIT program were analyzed in a medium-size city, Louisville, Kentucky, 9 years after the program's initiation. Costs associated with officer training, increased emergency psychiatry visits, and hospital admissions resulting from CIT activity were compared with the savings associated with diverted hospitalizations and reduced legal bookings.

RESULTS:
Based on an average of 2400 CIT calls annually, the overall costs associated with CIT per year were $2,430,128 ($146,079 for officer training, $1,768,536 for hospitalizations of patients brought in by CIT officers, $508,690 for emergency psychiatry evaluations, and $6823 for arrests). The annual savings of the CIT were $3,455,025 ($1,148,400 in deferred hospitalizations, $2,296,800 in reduced inpatient referrals from jail, and $9825 in avoided bookings and jail time). The balance is $1,024,897 in annual cost savings.


Evaluation of consequences of implementation of police crisis intervention team in Louisville.
El-Mallakh RS1, Spratt D, Butler C, Strauss G.

Author information
• 1Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Louisville School of Medicine, Louisville, Kentucky 40202, USA. rselma01@louisville.edu

Arrest rate for CIT runs is lower than non-CIT runs (2.1% vs 6.2%, respectively, P < 0.01). Hostage negotiation team callouts dropped by half. While the occupancy of the mental health unit in Jefferson County Jail has stayed relatively constant at around 1,100 patients/year, the referrals to intense psychiatric services (eg, Central State Hospital) has greatly dropped (from 53% in 2001 to 26.8% in 2004, P < 0.01).

CIT helps keep people with mental illnesses out of jail, and gets them into treatment.

• Studies show that police-based diversions, and CIT especially, significantly reduce arrests of people with serious mental illnesses.1, 2
Pre-booking diversion, including CIT, also reduced the number of re-arrests by 58%. 3

CIT reduces officer injuries, SWAT team emergencies, and the amount of time officers spend on the disposition of mental disturbance calls.

• After the introduction of CIT In Memphis, officer injuries sustained during responses to “mental disturbance” calls dropped 80%. 7

• After the introduction of CIT in Albuquerque, the number of crisis intervention calls requiring SWAT team involvement declined by 58%. 8

• In Albuquerque, police shootings in the community declined after the introduction of CIT. 9

• Officers trained in CIT rate their program as more effective at meeting the needs of people with mental illness, minimizing the amount of time they spend on “mental disturbance” calls, and maintaining community safety, than officers who rely on a mobile crisis unit or in-house social worker for assistance with “mental disturbance” calls. 10

References


Excerpts from “Crisis Intervention Teams in Florida,” by Crystal M. Staples, Saint Louis University

http://www.academia.edu/922239/Crisis_Intervention_Teams_in_Florida


The author finishes the article by explaining how an effective CIT program can help officers and reduce more costly alternatives such as incarceration. *It was helpful in the research of this project because it gave a background argument for saving the state of Florida money which is a point made in the conclusion of this project.* [Emphasis supplied].


This article is about how diverting people with mental illnesses before they are put in the criminal justice system will save money for the community. The authors offer figures for how much it costs to help people in mental health programs and in jail. They show that it costs less to help mentally ill consumers in mental health facilities than it does to keep these people in jail. *The article provided evidence for this project’s argument that Florida would save money by implementing CIT programs statewide.* [Emphasis supplied].


*This is a report focusing on CIT training for police and emergency call takers and how it can reduce the number of arrests and incarcerations for people with mental illnesses.* [Emphasis supplied].
[NOTE: If you’d find more detailed fiscal impact information such as this paper helpful please see SSB 5915, also assigned to House Appropriations.]