

# Walker County Criminal Justice Community Plan 2017-2018



Walker County citizens  
working together for a  
better, safer community.

*"Many hands make for a lighter load"*

Butch Davis, EMC  
Walker County

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# Walker County Criminal Justice Community Plan

## **What Is a Community Plan?**

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**This plan is formally known as the Walker County Public Safety Community Plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify gaps in services regarding criminal justice issues. The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that Criminal Justice Community Plans be developed and maintained by counties and regions throughout Texas.**

**The document that is represented here reflects the efforts of many in Walker County that are concerned with assuring that any gaps in services are closed, thus making our community a safer place to live and work. It is with grateful acknowledgement that the names of those involved in the process of developing this Plan are listed in the section entitled Community Planning Team.**

**Though the final draft of this Plan was completed in December of 2017, this is a work in progress. As new criminal justice goals are identified, the Planning Group changes. This change is necessary as a result of individual and agency circumstances and requirements altering within our county. This in turn may cause the makeup of the Plan to be subject to a certain degree of transformation from year to year. Walker County is intent in keeping up with these changes, and including them in updates that will be posted from time to time.**

**If you are reading this Plan and have not been involved in its development, you are invited to join in this ongoing effort. Any questions you may have can be addressed to the Community Plan Coordinator for Walker County, or to a Criminal Justice Program staff member with the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Contact information is provided at the end of this document.**

**The Walker County Commissioners Court supports the concept of community planning by providing staff support and resources for development and implementation of the Walker County Criminal Justice Community Plan. Additionally, the Walker County Commissioners Court supports grant applications from county departments as well as community organizations that address gaps in services identified in this Community Plan.**

## **Areas Represented**

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### **Incorporated Communities:**

City of Huntsville

City of New Waverly

City of Riverside

### **Unincorporated Communities:**

Arizona

Bethy Creek

Canyon Ranch

Cline Prairie

Crabbs Prairie

Deep River Plantation

Dodge

Elkins Lake

Four Notch Lookout

Galilee

Gospel Hill

Harmon Creek

Hawthorne

Horseshoe Lake

Kittrell

Lakeland

Old Waverly

Phelps

Pine Prairie

Riverside Harbor

Texas Grand Ranch

Thomas Lake

Whispering Pines

Wildwood Shores

**School Districts / Schools / Colleges:**

Huntsville Independent School District

New Waverly independent School District

Alpha Omega Academy

Huntsville Classical Academy

Huntsville Premier School

Summit Christian Academy

Faith Lutheran School

Tomorrow's Promise

Huntsville Head Start Child Development Center

Sam Houston State University

Gulf Coast Trades Center



# Historic Walker County

Walker County is one of the most historic counties in Texas. Best known as the home of General Sam Houston, hero of the Texas Revolution and the leading political figure in early Texas, Walker County is brimming with history aside from General Houston.

## The "Mount Vernon" of Texas

Walker County's principal city Huntsville was the leading cultural center of Texas prior to the Civil War. Leaders in law, education and business flocked to Huntsville and seeded other parts of Texas as it developed in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Because of its cultural influence and status as home of Texas' greatest hero and first President, the area came to be known as the "Mount Vernon of Texas."

## Education

Walker County and Huntsville were a cradle of learning and education in early Texas. The first history of Texas, *History of Texas from Its First Settlement in 1685 to Its Annexation to the United States in 1846*, was written by Walker County pioneer Henderson Yoakum.

The earliest school in Huntsville was the Huntsville Academy, probably also known as the "Brick Academy," was founded in 1845. Austin College, which is now located in Sherman, Texas, was founded in Huntsville in 1849 by Presbyterian minister, Daniel Baker, and Sam Houston was one of the first trustees. Andrew Female College, a pioneering institution for educating women, was founded in 1852 by the Methodist Church.

Sam Houston Normal Institute, now known as Sam Houston State University, was founded in 1879 on the site of the former Austin College.

Huntsville can be also considered the birthplace of the University of Texas. In 1859 Dr. Pleasant Williams Kittrell of Walker County introduced a bill in the State Legislature to create a state university. It passed, but the disruptions of the Civil War and its aftermath prevented it from being implemented. In 1879 Gov. Oran Roberts visited Huntsville for the dedication of Sam Houston Normal Institute. While Gov. Roberts dined with a group of civic leaders at the Steamboat House, then owned by prison superintendent, T. J. Goree, the conversation turned to the need for a state university. Gov. Roberts was convinced and returned to Austin where he began to advocate creation of the University of Texas, which finally occurred in 1883.

George Washington Baines, Jr., great-grandfather of President Lyndon Johnson, was a Baptist minister in Huntsville and later President of Baylor University.

## Law

Walker County was an early leader in law. Sam Houston was Huntsville's most famous lawyer. Three of the four largest law firms in Houston were co-founded by natives of Huntsville. James A. Baker helped form Baker and Botts, and Judge James A. Elkins was a founding member of the Vinson Elkins firm. Tom Ball was one of the founding partners of the Andrews Kurth firm.



## **Publishing**

The *Huntsville Item* is the second oldest newspaper in Texas. Marcellus E. Foster, the Huntsville native who founded the Houston Chronicle, started his career at the *Item*.

## **Business**

Walker County and Huntsville produced successful business people. The Gibbs brothers, Thomas and Sanford, founded Gibbs Brothers & Co., the oldest business in Texas still operating under the same ownership in the same location. Several people who made their fortunes in the Texas oil business. These include James Smither Abercrombie and descendants of the Evander Theophilus Josey family.

## **Community Planning Team**

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Community Plan Coordinator for Walker County: Sherri Pegoda, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, Walker County, Texas.

In developing this Community Plan, members of the team were divided into several focus groups for the purpose of narrowing the scope of research and data that are incorporated into the Plan. Some members may serve in multiple capacities/categories.

### **Juvenile Services:**

***Name:***

Dale Underwood  
Michelle Spencer  
Dave Smith  
Joseph Barrera  
Bill Daugette  
Ed Davis

***Agency:***

Gulf Coast Trades Center  
Boys & Girls Club of Walker County  
Good Shepherd Mission  
Huntsville High School Student  
Walker County Commissioner Precinct 3  
Restorative Justice

### **Victim Services:**

***Name:***

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John Waldo  
Jimmy Henry  
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***Agency:***

Sexual Assault and Abuse Free Environment (SAAFE)  
Huntsville Fire Department  
Walker County Commissioner Precinct 4  
Walker County CERT

### **Law Enforcement:**

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Huntsville Memorial Hospital

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SHSU

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Dave Smith

Ed Davis

Sally Kelly

***Agency:***

Wesley United Methodist Church

Good Shepherd Mission

Restorative Justice

First United Methodist Church



## Identification of Community Problems

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### General Public Safety Needs and Issues

Walker County, like many counties in the great State of Texas, has some general public safety needs and issues. Many of these are addressed as problems along with appropriate responses. The issues addressed within this document are addressed by priority in each group with the highest rate of priority being listed first. However, we want to state very clearly **all needs and issues are very important to the citizens of Walker County.** As stated previously, this document is a work in progress and therefore will be visited many times in the coming months with appropriate changes and/or additions being made as are deemed necessary.

**In each of the areas on the following pages, problems are identified and data is included that supports both the existence and severity of gaps as they are found in Walker County. Below the description and data are a discussion of the problems, the manner in which the problems are being addressed, and strategically how responses to these community problems could be improved.**

## Juvenile Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Sexual Assault</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Services</b> <b>Shelia Hugo, Walker County Adult Probation</b> <b>Jolene Miller, SAAFE House</b> <b>Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA)</b>
<p>According to Walker County Juvenile Services, ten (10%) percent juvenile arrests in 2013 were sex related offenses. There is a continued need to serve children who are dealing with sexual assault victimizations.</p> <p>This issue is far more prevalent in today's society as only one assault in ten is reported to appropriate authorities according to TAASA statistics. We need to provide early education regarding appropriate verses inappropriate contact, counseling for offenders and victims, training for teachers and community leaders to recognize signs of abuse, and sex education programs. Failure to report abuse is a significant problem.</p> <p>Educational programs on how to report sexual assault/harassment and the process of investigation are needed in order to reduce the misunderstanding of the criminal justice system and to increase the number of reports. Resources currently available include the SAAFE House, private counselors, probation supervision, and Education Service Center Region VI. Needs are education programs for parents and youth on the dangers of the internet, supervision of children, parenting skills training, certified counselors for sex offenders, and community education programs on how, and where, to report incidents of sexual assault.</p> <p>Providing safe haven, and support services, to survivors of sexual assault is essential to help stop the cycle of violence and to provide a chance for a healthy recovery from the trauma suffered. Thirty-one (31%) percent of all Texans report that they have been severely abused (physically or sexually) during their lifetime – most while juveniles. Most educators feel that the percent that have been sexually abused is much higher because juveniles are hesitant to acknowledge abuse due to shame, perceived peer pressure, fear, and even guilt.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>We need to provide educational programs that inform the public about the dangers of child predators on the Internet, social media, and in the community. Parents, and educators, should be educated regarding the signs of sexual abuse and how to report this abuse. Professional counseling should be made available free of charge, or discounted, in order to insure that all families, and the victims, obtain the counseling they will need. Teens, and college aged students, should be provided a curriculum regarding dating violence. Services such as crisis intervention, counseling, legal services, medical services, peer support groups, and other supportive services are very important to clients trying to heal and have healthy, successful lives. The demand for services far outweighs available resources. We need to provide in-home counseling so problems within the family unit can be addressed in the home.</p>	



Priority #2	
Problem Identified	Data
Assault/Family and Dating Violence	Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Services COH Huntsville Municipal Court Jolene Miller, SAAFE House
<p>Studies show that child abuse occurs in thirty (30%) percent to sixty (60%) percent of family violence cases. In 2013, thirty-three (33%) percent juvenile arrests were for assaults – making them the highest number of referrals to Walker County Juvenile Services.</p> <p>SAAFE House was able to provide housing for one hundred forty-four (144) children who had either personally been victims of abuse, or who had witnessed abuse in their households causing their mothers to seek shelter. We are also dealing with more college students who are victims of domestic violence through dating violence.</p> <p>Some youth do not know how to communicate, nor express their anger appropriately. These juveniles often receive citations at school for disruption of class, fights, and arrested for assaults against peers and/or family members. Parenting skills training, family counseling, and anger management programs are needed. Current resources available include the School Resource Officer (SRO), Anti-Bullying program, SAAFE House, diversionary class-probation, Winner's Circle, and TCBHC. In this past year SAAFE House has not only seen more children affected by family violence from their parents, but also an increase in dating violence. Our youth have often not received the services they need which would enable them to deal with their own victimization, or the abuse(s) they have witnessed. This may be due to two factors; the lack of transportation available to them and little, or no, follow through by their caregivers or the fear of their caregivers to assist them in receiving services because they are still in the abusive situation. The cost to the community, and the consequences of family violence regarding our youth, are very significant. We have a constant need in our community to provide extensive prevention outreach services by going into the schools to help children understand the effect of violence. Without counseling, groups, and/or a medium, that are able to provide age appropriate services, we will certainly see this cycle of violence perpetuated into the next generation. The demand for services at this time far outweighs our available resources.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>There is a huge need for Immediate access to services and the ability to provide education while in the shelter related to the dynamics of abuse, safety assessments and safety planning. Also information to youth to help them with alternative ways of dealing with the emotions inside of them will help them change patterns and not repeat generational violence. Training in "parenting skills" should be made available to parents/guardians whose children have received citations through Municipal Court, or JP Courts, and to those children who are currently on probation. Free family counseling, or counseling at a reduced cost, would help families in learning better communications and in resolving family issues. We should provide not only an anger management program that incorporates animals to help children understand their emotions, and empathy, to another living thing, but also classes on communication and peaceful conflict resolution. We should provide community education and support groups. If individualized services are needed, a meeting with a counselor/advocate at their office would be arranged.</p>	



Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation</b> <b>Jolene Miller, SAAFE House</b> <b>Pam Patterson, RN, DSHS</b>
<p>We have children who have mental health needs that are not being addressed due to lack of funding, the difficult process of getting counseling services, lack of transportation (going out of county for Child Psychologist) , and long term services. Currently we are able to utilize our local university for counseling services; however these are only for short periods of time and the counselors change often. Parents need to be educated about the importance of getting mental health services and maintaining those services for their children. Some families find it difficult to be able to afford medications.</p> <p>Children living in a home with violence are also at risk due to the lack of mental health options available for them. And in a violent home environment, parents may not be attending to this need. This creates more aggressive behavior in our shelters and the youth struggle to maintain any consistency in their schooling either because of attendance or the lack of ability to focus.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Funding needs to be available to provide children with a more stable counseling center and assist in transportation. Counseling should include a parental component. In-home services would be ideal for the families in Walker County. Clinical Treatment Teams are needed for youth identified with mental health issues Only through long term intervention services will we begin to see a change in the patterns of their life and life style.</p>	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Distracted Drivers</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation</b> <b>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)</b> <b>Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC)</b> <b>Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)</b>
<p>The popularity of mobile devices has had some unintended and even dangerous consequences. We now know that mobile communications is linked to a significant increase in distracted driving, resulting in injury and loss of life. Texting has become such a huge distraction that some states have made texting while driving a traffic offense. There are three main types of distraction: visual (taking your eyes off the road), manual (taking your hands off the wheel), and cognitive (taking your mind off of your driving). Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger the driver, passenger, and bystander safety. Motor vehicle crashes, many involving alcohol and other drugs, are the leading cause of death for fifteen (15) to twenty (20) year olds. The age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers is the under twenty (20) age group – sixteen per cent (16%) of all drivers younger than twenty (20) involved in fatal crashes were reported to have been distracted while driving. In the United States, the crash rate per mile driven for sixteen (16) to nineteen (19) year-olds is four (4) times the risk for older drivers. Each year our municipal and county courts see a rise in traffic citations for juveniles. The youth in our community should be made aware of the responsibilities and dangers of teen driving. The resources we have available are: the Shattered Dreams program and insurance agencies that offer discounts for Steer Clear programs. We need assistance in the purchasing, and distributing, of curriculum for schools and parents.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>We need funds to purchase curriculum and hire persons to be able to teach that curriculum for the schools, parents, organizations, or insurance companies. We should provide an incentive through insurance companies, or the schools, for children who successfully complete a course or program. The Walker County Extension Office may be able to provide safety education including a drunken driving simulator, rollover convincer, and bike safety. As TABC no longer offers mini-grants to help pay for some of the costs involved in the "Shattered Dreams" educational experience, funds are needed by Walker County schools to present this to the students.</p>	

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Truancy</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation</b> <b>COH Huntsville Municipal Court</b> <b>Janie Farris, JP, Pct. 1</b> <b>HISD</b>
<p>According to COH Municipal Court, in 2014, twenty-nine (29) parents received citations for Contributing to Nonattendance and there were forty-five (45) cases filed for Failure to Attend. According to the JP for Precinct 1, there were fifty (50) Failure to Attend-Parents. There is a correlation between truancy rates and prison populations. Stay-in-school programs and vocational and job skills training are needed.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>We need to implement stay-in-school programs and vocational and job skills training which should be provided by the local High Schools. We should explore the need for an incentive program in the way of scholarships, merchandise, or monetary gifts for students who are successful in school and maintain an excellent attendance record.</p>	



Priority #6	
Problem Identified	Data
Gangs	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation</b> <b>HPD</b> <b>WCSO</b> <b>The Houston Chronicle</b> <b>Janie H. Farris, JP – Pct. 1</b>
<p>According to The Houston Chronicle, there are over 20,000 gang members now in our region which is an increase of twenty-nine (29) percent since 2010, and these have continued in growth through 2014. Local gang members are becoming younger and more violent, especially toward law enforcement. Gang awareness education programs and anti-gang programs are needed. Our community has seen an increase in occurrences of tagging/graffiti and criminal behavior. According to section 71.01 (d) of the Texas Penal Code, a criminal street gang is defined as three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol and identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities. According to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics in 2013 some 33,000 violent street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs with about 1.4 million members are criminally active in the United States today. Currently in Walker County we have many different hybrid gangs that have strong ties with other larger more serious and stronger organized gangs from surrounding cities. Some gangs that have been identified in Walker County, just to name a few, are the Bloods, Crips, MS13, Old House Locos (OHL), Money Making Team (MMT), F Troop, Top Notch Klick (TNK), Money Over bitches (MOB), Mexicans Taking Kontrol (MTK), Smacking On Bitches (SOB), and the West Crips. Most of these gangs have originated in the Walker County area, but they all have some sort of connection to a much larger gang which makes them a threat to the community. Gang members have resorted to social media in recruiting and promoting their gangs; therefore, tagging a location is not really a necessity. Through social media one can learn who all is involved in the same gang, what colors represent them, where they are located, what their gang hand signs are, if any, what they call themselves, and what their involvement in different activities. Through social media we can gain knowledge on a specific individual, or gang member, from safe location. This resource needs to be utilized. Although the information that is posted o social media might not be used in a court setting, it can give the community some insight into gang, and individual, activity at ta safe distance. We do not have a program to address this problem. It is certainly very difficult and costly for businesses to clean up the tagging/graffiti.</p>	
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>Our best response to the gang issue in Walker County would be to organize our own mentoring program for our youth. We could benefit from a mentoring program which has reformed former gang members. You can become a mentor, join a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), volunteer at your local school, start an after school program, or volunteer with a youth service organization. You can also simply spend quality time with your own children.</p> <p>Several solutions are: Tougher sentences for gang members and tougher restrictions at the schools to eliminate and/or decrease the amount of gang activity. Funding needs to be available to secure more resource officers in our schools, a gang task force that can provide information to local law enforcement agencies and probation regarding gang activity, and a gang division in local law enforcement to concentrate on the gang problem.</p>	



Priority #7	
Problem Identified	Data
Runaways	Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation Janie Farris, JP, Pct. 1 Texas Association of Counties (TAC) HPD
<p>In 2013, there were one hundred twenty-seven (127) runaway call reported between the HPD and the WCSO. The runaways are not receiving the help they need. Training in parenting skills, professional counseling to teach effective communication techniques, educational programs on the dangers incurred by running away, problem solving skills, and conflict resolution are needed. Runaways are also occurring because of violence in their homes and toward themselves.</p>	
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>We need to provide the youth with school counselors in the schools who can address issues that may cause a juvenile to run away. With funding, this counseling service would be free, or at least low cost, to the family in order to ensure attendance by all family members. This is needed as Walker County has the lowest income of the thirteen (13) counties in H-GAC as of 2013 and a poverty rate of twenty-five and one half (25.5%) percent. We also need to provide in-home counseling to insure all problems within the family can be addressed in a home setting. As a crisis agency, we need to provide longer term services to help meet the needs of those individuals.</p>	

Priority #8	
Problem Identified	Data
After School Programs	Sandra Clifton, Huntsville Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Michelle Spencer, BGCWC
<p>In 2013, the YMCA had approximately two hundred thirty-one (231) youths in their afterschool programs (pre-k through 6<sup>th</sup> grade), of those one hundred thirty-eight (138) youths, fifty-one (51) were receiving financial assistance. The YMCA Teen Center averages sixty (60) youths per day. We have a few programs that address after school needs; however, they are not able to handle the high volume of needs that are in our area. The YMCA in our area can service children between the ages of two (2) to sixteen (16). We lack the funding to provide more programs and to accommodate the space that would be needed to service the higher volume of kids.</p> <p>We have a Boys &amp; Girls Club that can assist children between the ages of six (6) to thirteen (13) due to <u>limited space</u>. In 2013, the BGCWC served four hundred two (402) youth in two locations. Eighty-eight (88) percent of the four hundred two (402) youth receive free or reduced lunches from HISD. BGCWC annual membership dues is \$20.00 per member and \$15.00 a month activity fee. Fees are kept low to accommodate the large free/reduced population. On a shoestring budget, BGCWC provides a before and after school program, 6:30am-7:30am and 3:30pm-5:30pm at Scott Johnson Elementary and all other schools are served at the Martin Luther King Recreation Center from 3:30pm-7:00pm. Programs include, but are not limited to, homework assistance, mentoring, character / life skills, health / physical education, and the arts.</p> <p>Transportation is also an issue for after school programs. Many families do not have the means to provide their child with transportation to after school programs.</p>	
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>To maximize the number of children that can be served by the BGCWC, funding is needed for a new building located in the NE part of Huntsville would allow this organization to provide services to children between the ages of four (4) to eighteen (18) that might be missed due to transportation, location and/or excessive cost.</p>	



Priority #9	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Supervision</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation</b>
<p>A lack of appropriate adult supervision is identified as a factor that contributes to the delinquency of youth in our community. Lack of supervision also contributes to family violence as youth do not have the skill set/development to handle their anger in other ways than by using violence. Parenting classes and family counseling are needed as well as suitable after school and weekend programs which would engage our youth in productive programs.</p> <p>There is a need for a program that mentors/educates parents. In addition, parents of children with functional needs may need assistance during the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Our community needs to have avenues of distribution available in order to distribute parenting skills information, either through classes provided free to parents, or through literature. We can contact parents through the local hospital, clinics, doctor's offices, schools, adult and juvenile probation, churches, and local organizations. We need to provide parenting classes to discuss appropriate discipline and supervision. We also need to provide in-home counseling so problems within the family unit can be addressed in the home.</p>	

Priority #10	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Mentors/Early Intervention</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation</b>
<p>There are youth in our community that would benefit from a mentoring or early intervention program. If there were programs that could deter children from delinquency it would greatly impact our community. We should provide programs such as character building, good role models/mentors in order to encourage achievement and positive behaviors.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>We need to provide programs which will aid in developing a child's character in a positive manner. This needs to be addressed at a younger age before a child reaches the Intermediate or Junior High level at school. Mentoring programs would be a great way for children to have a positive role model in their life. Character building curriculum would be beneficial in the school setting. A grant which would provide the resource to obtain someone to teach this in the schools, during after school programs, or probation would be invaluable. Introducing anti-bullying curriculum in the schools that could be provided by the Walker County Extension Office could help. Other programs that could be beneficial in the schools are character counts, self-esteem programs, and a new Preparation for Adult Living Services (P.A.L.S.) program with older kids mentoring younger students.</p>	

Priority #11	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation Ed Davis, Episcopal Diocese of Texas – Restorative Justice</b>
<p>We have an on-going problem with juveniles and parents not taking responsibility for their actions. They lack compassion for victims. We often see multiple referrals for the same children. Current available resources include probation, Municipal Court, the Alternative School Program, and detention. Detention, if used, must include educational programs that focus on character traits and social skills. Restorative Practices need to be instituted by Juvenile Probation to serve the victims of wrong-doing and as a means to hold juveniles accountable for their behavior and help them comprehend the consequences of their actions which affect others.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Juveniles should be provided with a mandatory victim empathy program/class through probation and municipal courts. We also need to create a victim/offender mediation program. Family counseling would be beneficial.</p>	

Priority #12	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, WC Juvenile Probation</b>
<p>Currently Walker County does not have a transportation service available to serve citizens in getting to facilities within the county for those programs and medical services that are available to them. With our high unemployment rate, there are many families without transportation to get to the different facilities within the county. There is also no transportation service (see Priority #3) for those individuals who have to go out of county for Child Phycologist services.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Walker County needs to have a transportation service available to transport citizens to facilities within Walker County and to surrounding counties if service is not available in this county.</p>	



Priority #13	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Prevention Programs for Older Students</b>	<b>Jill Saumell, Walker County Juvenile Probation Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Ed Davis, Episcopal Diocese of Texas – Restorative Justice</b>
<p>We currently have programs available to children who are in the Criminal Justice System. Our community needs preventative programs that will keep children from entering the Criminal Justice System in the first place. According to the CDF, children in <u>adult</u> jails commit suicide eight times as often as their counterparts in <u>juvenile</u> facilities. In addition, children in adult facilities are five times more likely to be sexually assaulted, and twice as likely to be beaten by jail staff. Most of the programs we have in our community focus on young children or children who have already committed a crime. There is nothing for those children who are at-risk and older.</p> <p>Restorative Practices should be instituted to create a mechanism for students/young people to peaceably resolve conflicts before anti-social behavior erupts.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>Funding to provide resources, staff, and a building site to implement programs in the school or outside the school setting is a strong need for Walker County. We should never forget that the youth of today are our future for tomorrow.</p>	

## Victim Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Need for Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services</b>	<b>Uniform Crime Report (UCR)</b> <b>HPD</b> <b>Walker County SO</b> <b>SAAFE House</b> <b>TCFV</b> <b>TAASA</b>
<p>Family Violence and Sexual Assault continue to be increasing crimes in Walker County affecting adults, youth, and children. The community has identified the need for immediate and adequate responses to victims of these crimes. These crimes affects all age groups, ethnicities, socioeconomic levels, and genders and encompasses marital rape, intimate partner violence, incest, elder abuse, adults molested as children, and child abuse. According to TCFV, 1 in 3 Texans will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes. TAASA reported that 6.3 million Texans have experienced some form of sexual assault in their lifetime. Both TCFV and TAASA report statistics showing that sexual assault and family violence are vastly underreported; however, statistics reveal a high number of reports in Walker County related to these crimes. According to the 2016 UCR, Walker County had 348 incidents of family violence, and 37 incidents of sexual assault reported. From January through November 2017, HPD has had 42 reports of sexual assault and 157 reports of family violence, while Walker County SO has had 31 reports of sexual assault and 77 reports of family violence. SAAFE House provided services to 323 victims of family violence and 95 victims of sexual assault in the past fiscal year. Since September 2017, SAAFE House has served 120 victims of family violence and 45 victims of sexual assault.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>Victims of Family Violence and Sexual Assault need to have immediate access to services including crisis intervention, safety, support services, advocacy, accompaniment to law enforcement, medical care, the criminal justice system, and information and referral. SAAFE House is the only 24/7 agency available for family violence and sexual assault victims in Walker County, providing both residential and non-residential services. We need funding to increase staffing for these services as well as improve current staff through training and education. Additionally, there is an increased need for bilingual services, creating a need for bilingual advocates. Lastly, there is a high need for education in the community in order to increase knowledge and spread awareness about the issues. Through community education, more victims of family violence and sexual assault would have access to needed services.</p>	



Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Prevention/Education Involving Violent Behavior to Youth</b>	<b>Texas Advocacy Project TCFV SAAFE House</b>
<p>Youth are bombarded by social media that encourages teen dating violence. Harassment and peer pressure create norms for violent behaviors, while technology creates further opportunity for privacy violations, bullying, and continued violence. According to the Texas Advocacy Project, 1/3 of all teens report abuse in their romantic relationships, 12% experience physical violence, 40% of girls between age 14 and 17 know someone their age who has been hit by their boyfriend, 58% of rape victims were between ages 12 and 24, and over 1/3 of women who were victims of family violence reported their children were also abused. According to TCFV, 60% of females surveyed in Texas have had experience with dating violence which consists of peer pressure, verbal abuse, physical violence, and sexual violence. With the ever-growing popularity of social media sites, it has become easier for these behaviors to manifest amongst our youth.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>We need to enhance education in the community specifically targeting teachers, parents, and youth. Affected youth need access to services that will help them feel supported and able to take action against violence behaviors they experience. Education would ideally begin at an early age and continue through graduation. SAAFE House needs funding to enhance current education within the schools to include education and prevention for youth and teachers. Reaching these populations might decrease casual, promiscuous sexual activity amongst youth that increases the likelihood for risky and/or violent behavior in dating relationships and amongst peer groups.</p>	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Lack of Support Services for Victims of Varying Crimes including Human Trafficking</b>	<b>UCR SAAFE House</b>
<p>According to the 2016 UCR, there were 1, 284 total offenses in Walker County. There is a need for the development of support groups to assist other victims of crime in the community. SAAFE House provides services to victims of sexual assault and family violence; however, there are no agencies available to provide similar support to families of murder victims, victims coping with mental health issues, and a variety of other victimization categories. Additionally, services for non-English speaking victims are needed. Lastly, there is no specifically designated agency to serve victims of human trafficking.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>Victims of other crimes need to have access to services geared toward healing after trauma. We need funding to enhance availability of resources and services for victims of other crimes including human trafficking.</p>	



Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Lack of Adequate Residential Facility for Family Violence and Sexual Assault Victims</b>	<b>SAAFE House</b>
<p>SAFE House currently has a residential facility to house victims of family violence and sexual assault; however, the facility was built in 1952 and is inefficient for several reasons including inefficient energy usage, lack of adequate space for staff and clients, and inadequate location. Victims who come into shelter are housed with other clients leaving little space for each family. The facility itself is not in ideal condition, and would cost more in repairs than building a new facility. Additionally, security for the location of the facility is a huge need in order to provide the best protection for clients.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>The community has identified the need for a new facility that can meet the needs of survivors while also giving SAAFE House the means to provide more effective services.</p>	

### Law Enforcement (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Insufficient Staff in the Walker County Public Safety Communications Center</b>	<b>Deborah Gilbert, Director, WCPSCC Anthony Tryon, Assistant Director, WCPSCC John Davila, Sergeant Detective, WCSO</b>
<p>Currently the WCPSCC furnishes two-way radio service to all law enforcement and fire agencies in Walker county with the exception of the Sam Houston State University Police Department. During a normal twenty-four (24) hour period (excluding disasters and other extended events) the WCPSCC will handle approximately four hundred and fifty (450) phone calls per day while dispatching approximately three hundred (300) of these calls. The operators taking these calls have to be experts in multi-tasking as they can be answering a trauma 9-1-1 call while directing a high speed police pursuit as well as inserting information into the computer and focusing on the constantly changing computer screens. There are two consoles that are in constant operation to handle these calls. However, there are a total of four (4) consoles available for use. These, in turn, point to the severe need to have adequate staffing of the WCPSCC. The WCPSCC currently services agencies which have grown in size (some more than doubling). There has been no growth in this department due to available budget.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>The WCPSCC needs to add at least four (4) qualified, and eventually fully trained, operators to man the current system. Grant funding is definitely a high priority need for this office.</p>	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Communications System funding</b>	<b>Deborah Gilbert, Director, WCPSCC Anthony Tryon, Assistant Director, WCPSCC</b>
<p>Problem Identified: Walker County currently uses the Harris County Regional Radio system to communicate with local and regional agencies. At this time Harris County is financially responsible for the tower leases, maintenance, and software agreements that are necessary to keep the Walker County portion of this system functioning. Harris County is asking Walker County to take over much of the financial responsibility for this radio system in the upcoming years. This will be a significant amount of money that Walker County has not spent in the past and will require a funding source.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>All agencies in Walker County use the Harris County Radio system, and in order to continue using the system will have to take over financial responsibility for the system. This can be done either by becoming a system owner through Harris County, or joining another existing owner on the Harris County System, such as Montgomery County or the Brazos Valley Council of Governments. Walker County will need significant funds for this project, and seeking grant funds for this would greatly reduce the burden on Walker County and its citizens.</p>	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>The Walker County Courthouse Needs to Have Upgraded Security</b>	<b>Reed Prehoda, Constable, Pct. #2 Stephanie Stroud, Assistant WCCDA Mike Legerski, Sgt., HPD James Barnes, Lt., HPD</b>
<p>With the increased violence directed toward law enforcement, judges, and institutions that represent authority, there is an urgent need to immediately secure and protect the Walker County Court House, county personnel, and citizens visiting or working at this facility.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Funds need to be immediately available to obtain and install security cameras, external and internal, along with metal detectors installed at all entrances to the Walker County Courthouse. There is also a need for additional security staff to be deployed at the courthouse.</p>	



Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Full deployment of Body Cameras</b>	<b>James Barnes, Lt., HPD</b> <b>Curt Landrum, Lt., HPD</b> <b>Mike Legerski, Sgt., HPD</b> <b>Eddy Lawson, Sgt., WCSO</b>
<p>Society is becoming increasingly litigious and the need for officers to cover themselves and their departments is a high level concern. Future legislation is expected to call for some type of mandatory implementation of body cameras. The need to purchase and implement these cameras as well as server space to store the digital media will be costly.</p> <p>As this is an item that could certainly reduce the amount of dollars lost in litigation as well as lost time for personnel in defending their actions. Therefore, it is an item that will actually pay for itself in the long run. And the use of body cameras will reduce the amount of negative reporting by news media looking for a dynamic story before all facts are known.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Look for grants that may be available. In the meantime, incremental purchases from existing budgets will have to be used until full deployment is achieved.</p>	

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>The Walker County Annex Building Needs to Have Upgraded Security Cameras</b>	<b>Reed Prehoda, Constable, Pct. #2</b> <b>Stephanie Stroud, Assistant WCCDA</b> <b>Mike Legerski, Sgt., HPD</b> <b>James Barnes, Lt., HPD</b>
<p>With the increased violence directed toward law enforcement, judges, and institutions that represent authority, there is an urgent need to immediately protect the Walker County Annex Building, county personnel, and citizens visiting or working at this facility. At present, the only security cameras are located at the County Tax Assessor-Collector Office and they only film the counter area.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Funds need to be immediately available to obtain and install security cameras, external and internal.</p>	



Priority #6																																											
Problem Identified	Data																																										
Walker County Needs to have a Mental Health Unit to Answer Mental Health	James Barnes, Lt., HPD Stephanie Stroud, Assistant WCCDA Mike Legerski, Sgt., HPD																																										
Officers receiving calls for services involving persons in crisis or otherwise in need of mental health service are effectively out of service for the remainder of the call, which can last for hours. This affects the minimum staffing and overall safety of the rest of the shift. With today's societal problems and the infusion in Walker County of returning veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS) and other mental problems, the population of those suffering from mental problems will likely continue to grow in number possibly leading to a need for specialized response from law enforcement.																																											
<table><tr><th colspan="6">EMH Warrants by JP</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>JP#1</th><th>JP#2</th><th>JP#3</th><th>JP#4</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>2012</td><td>4</td><td>44</td><td>6</td><td>18</td><td>72</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>32</td><td>33</td><td>7</td><td>11</td><td>83</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>20</td><td>33</td><td>11</td><td>20</td><td>84</td></tr><tr><td>**2015</td><td>23</td><td>43</td><td>8</td><td>17</td><td>91</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>79</td><td>153</td><td>32</td><td>66</td><td>330</td></tr></table> <p>** to date 9/21/15</p>		EMH Warrants by JP							JP#1	JP#2	JP#3	JP#4	Total	2012	4	44	6	18	72	2013	32	33	7	11	83	2014	20	33	11	20	84	**2015	23	43	8	17	91	Total	79	153	32	66	330
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Funds need to be immediately available for the formation of two (4) to six (6) officers acting as a Mental Health Unit. These officers would be specially trained to deal with mental health problems and would not be a part of any minimal staffing for any department, or office, thereby being able to dedicate the time and effort to handle these calls with the care our citizens deserve.																																											

Priority #7	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Lack of Continuous Training for Law Enforcement Personnel</b>	<b>James Barnes, Lt., HPD Curt Landrum, Lt., HPD Mike Legerski, Sgt., HPD Stephanie Stroud, WCCDAs Office</b>
<p>Firearms' training with qualified instructors is always a necessity. However, going to the shooting range only improves your proficiency at hitting a stationary target. There is a great need for the use of non-lethal ammunition and firearms in order to train in a real-time, live scenario. This type of active shooter training makes the trainee more aware of the instant decisions and actions required to bring you and your team to a safe conclusion.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Walker County has a continuous need for training in many areas such as Human Trafficking, Evidence Collection and Processing, Use of Force, Child/Adult Abuse, Arrest/Search/Seizure, Violence, Juvenile Sexual Assault, Adult Sexual Assault, Cultural Diversity, Gang Recognition, Stress Management, Special Weapons and Tactics, and Verbal Communications (gang talk, street language, Spanish).</p> <p>This specialized training makes the expense overly costly for most agencies to purchase. In addition to the above, training simulators are needed to enhance the judgment and decision making that occurs in high risk activities.</p> <p>There is a very high need for "Simunition" products for the on-going active shooter training required of our officers. Non-lethal "Simunition" products such as automatic handguns, AR type rifles, shotguns, ammunition for these, safety helmets, eyewear, protective shields, clothing, etc. is highly needed. With this equipment, officers will be able to train in real time, real life, scenarios using non-lethal weapons for such training as house-to-house clearing, hostage taking, terrorist neutralizing, large scale armed robberies, etc. This training allows for the proper evaluation by command staff which could ultimately lead to not only saving lives in law enforcement, but also bystanders.</p>	

Priority #8	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Walker County Sheriff's Office is in need of a Substation</b>	<b>Eddy Lawson, Sgt., WCSO Reed Prehoda, Constable, Pct. #2 Mike Legerski, Sgt., HPD</b>
<p>The increased population in the county, particularly the southern portion, is increasing the need for a substation for officers to work out of. Officers need a safe place to be able to complete reports and take the occasional break. The area needs to be equipped with minimal clerical devices such as computer and printer, and restroom facilities.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Deputies could be provided access to the current JP offices or a portion of the offices. Funds will be needed to retrofit these offices for law enforcement use.</p>	



**Priority #9***Problem Identified      Data*

**The WCSO  
volunteer group -  
Citizens On Patrol  
(COP) - is  
Patrolling With  
Limited Vehicle or  
Hand-Held Radio  
Equipment.**

**Joseph Bongiovi, COP**

The COP Program is a part of the Uniform Services Division of the WCSO and under the Office of the Sheriff, Clint McRae. In essence, the program is designed to be an extra set of eyes and ears for the individual units within the WCSO. They are trained to assist deputies with day-to-day operations as requested and needed. They are also available for Search and Rescue (SAR) operations and to assist other county law enforcement agencies. The COP is a not-for-profit organization and uses no county or state funds. Their operating budget is funded entirely by fund raising, donations from the citizens and businesses of Walker County, and grants. At the present time, they operate two marked patrol units that are equipped with warning bar lights that can be activated while directing traffic or assisting deputies. However, the radios in both units are in need of replacement as one does not work and the other only works sporadically. At this time there are no 800 hand-held radios available. This translates into the problem that when COPs are working from either the patrol car, or on foot, they have no communication with other officers or dispatch (WCPSCC). The lack of radio equipment could actually become a life or death situation as the COP often works on the outer edges of Walker County where cell phones have no coverage.

*Potential Response to Problem*

Funds need to be immediately available to replace the two (2) vehicle console units that do not work properly and also secure four (4) hand-held radios to be used while on foot to better insure the safety of these volunteers.

## Medical Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority # 1	
Problem Identified	Data
<b>Prevention, Education and Services to address High Mortality Rates, Chronic Diseases, Preventable Conditions, and Unhealthy Lifestyles</b>	<p>Data suggests that higher rates of specific mortality causes and unhealthy behaviors warrants a need for increased preventive education and services to improve the health of the community. Walker County had a health rankings health factors of 226 out of 243 (243 being the worst). Health factors include: smoking, obesity physical inactivity, sexually transmitted infections, Air pollution – particulate matter, drinking water violations, severe housing problems, driving alone to work, and long commutes.</p> <p>Cancer and heart disease are the two leading causes of death in Walker County. Walker County has higher mortality rates than Texas for the following causes of death: cerebrovascular diseases; chronic lower respiratory diseases; diabetes mellitus; nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis; septicemia; intentional self-harm (suicide); lung and bronchus cancer; and colon and rectum cancer.</p> <p>Walker County has higher prevalence rates of communicable diseases (chlamydia,) and chronic conditions such as HIV/AIDs, diabetes, obesity and asthma than Texas, as well as higher percentages of residents participating in unhealthy lifestyle behaviors such as physical inactivity and smoking than the state. With regards to maternal and child health, specifically, Walker County has a higher percentage of low birth weight births than the state.</p> <p>Walker County faces lower rates of primary care physicians, dentists and mental health care providers per 100,000 than the state, and is also designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area and Medically Underserved Area, as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).</p> <p>Interviewees raised concern over the high rates of obesity, diabetes and heart failure that they believe are exacerbated due to the lack of education within the community regarding the availability of resources and programs to promote healthy lifestyle behaviors.</p>
<b>Potential Response to Problem</b>	
<p><b>Objective: Implement programs and provide educational opportunities that seek to address unhealthy lifestyles and behaviors in the community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Huntsville Memorial Hospital (HMH) will explore the sponsorship or the offering of an annual Diabetes Health Fair that would provide glucose screenings and education on-site for connection to primary care service for follow up at no cost for residents in the community who are at risk for or are currently diagnosed with diabetes.</li> <li>HMH will explore offering Diabetic Foot Exams within Walker County and the surrounding communities.</li> <li>HMH will explore a collaboration with the local health club, and the Sam Houston State University, College of Health Sciences Nutrition Assessment Center, to provide counseling, various screenings (blood pressure, glucose, BMI, weight, visceral fat, body age) and education (healthy eating, the importance of exercise, maintaining a healthy weight), and culinary medicine demonstrations, to the community at large.</li> </ul>	



### **Priority # 1**

- HMM will explore opportunities to increase awareness and attendance of current health fairs, health screenings, mobile clinics, monthly support groups, and educational service, through various social media outlets.
- HMM will explore relationships with and providing training to staff at local nursing homes on the appropriate treatment of medically complex patients in order to strengthen the transition of care between the HMM facility and local nursing homes.
- HMM will seek to develop a new website to promote its services.
- Consider partnering with social service (i.e.: therapy) to provide counseling related to chronic disease management.
- Create a social media network to address and create a dialog for prevention of sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy, and assist with underserved families.
- DSHS and HMM to explore partnership to prevent, educate and address chronic disease, unhealthy lifestyle choices and risk taking behaviors through evidence based programs for adults and teens within Walker County, Texas.

## Priority # 2

<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Access to Affordable Care and Reducing Health Disparities among Specific Populations</b>	<p>Data suggests that some residents in the study area face significant cost barriers when accessing the healthcare system. Walker County has a lower median household income (\$40,764) than the state (\$50,347), as well as a higher unemployment rate (5.3%) state (4.6%) and a higher percentage of families living below poverty. With regards to children, specifically, Walker County has a higher percentage of children living below poverty (27.9%) state (24.5%). Interviewees discussed affordability and cost barriers as concerns that disproportionately affect the low income, un/underinsured, prison workers, and elderly populations. One interviewee specifically stated: "Many doctors don't take Medicare. There are no real options specifically for the low income." The lack of providers accepting low income patients or government payers limits patient access to health care in the community, specifically with regards to access to primary and specialty care providers. A few interviewees mentioned that the cost of health care services for un/underinsured patients is the top reason why patients access the Emergency Department instead of a primary care physicians or clinics. It was also noted that the cost associated with prescription medications and dental insurance, specifically, are prohibitive for residents of the county no matter their socioeconomic status. When asked about which specific groups are at risk for inadequate care, interviewees spoke about elderly, youth, and minority residents. With regards to the elderly population, interviewees discussed transportation barriers, lack of local mental health services (specifically inpatient services), and a lack of elder care facilities (specifically for low income seniors) as significant concerns for elderly residents. With regards to the youth population, interviewees discussed an increasing need for broad sex education, as well as a need for mental health services (particularly early intervention for children with autism) as specific challenges for this subgroup of the population. Lastly, for minority residents, interviewees discussed language barriers (for Hispanic residents) and a lack of trust in the health care system that disproportionately affects this subpopulation in the community.</p>

### *Potential Response to Problem*

**Objective: Implement and offer programs that aim to reduce health disparities by targeting specific populations.**

- Students in dietetics and other medical fields will compile data using a 24 hours recall or 3 day food record to identify potential nutritional deficiencies.
- Build a centralized food distribution center that serves the smaller food pantries locally.
- Increase options for job skills training, consider a train the trainer program for IPEET (IPEET, Integrity Plus Economics Empowerment Training) or similar service, 12 week training program to assist at risk individuals in improving life skills with the idea to increase employment opportunities and thus increasing the health care options.



Priority # 3	
Problem Identified	Data
Access to Specialty Care Services and Providers	<p>Lack of local specialists was mentioned by most interviewees, especially for the low income population. Gastroenterology, Cardiology, Orthopedic Surgery, Neurology, Endocrinology, and Dermatology were all specialties that were indicated as needs from interviewees. One interviewee specifically stated: "Some of our doctors aren't taking any more patients. We have a growth factor that makes primary care tough. We need GI and orthopedic surgeons. They've been working on cardiac specialists but they aren't enough. And neurologists and endocrinologists are big needs."</p> <p>Travel to specialists in neighboring cities as well as other facilities with more advanced levels of care were noted as barriers to care for many residents in Walker County, as transportation issues even within the county can be a hindrance to care. Many interviewees also mentioned transportation as a primary issue restricting health care access in the county for both primary care and specialists partly due to cab rides being prohibitively expensive.</p>
Potential Response to Problem	
<p><b>Objective: Provide access to specialty care services in the community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMM would offer space for rotating specialties, as identified per the needs assessment, in order to increase access to local specialty care for residents and reduce the hardship of transportation on local residents and patients.</li> <li>• HMM will look at recruiting efforts to pursue specialists as identified per the gap assessment.</li> <li>• HMM will explore the opportunity to expand the Referral Coordinator program to ensure that patients who are discharged from the hospital and have received a specialist referral have secured an appointment with their respective specialist.</li> <li>• HMM will explore opportunities to increase awareness of its specialty service offerings in the community through radio, billboard, print advertisements and social media.</li> <li>• HMM will explore opportunities to increase the specialist exposure by taking the providers out into the community, having them meet with primary care providers, and providing educational sessions hosted by the providers based on their respective specialty.</li> <li>• HMM would look at the possibility of adding a Case Manager in the rural primary care clinics to assist with referrals to specialists and access to care.</li> <li>• HMM would look at the possibility of adding a Patient Navigator in the hospital case management department to assist with those patients with access to Primary and Specialty Care Access.</li> </ul>	



Priority # 4	
Problem Identified	Data
Access to Primary Care Services and Providers	<p>Data suggests that residents in Walker County do not have adequate access to primary care services and providers. Walker County has a higher rate of preventable hospitalizations than the nation, and also has a lower rate of primary care providers per 100,000 than the state.</p> <p>Interviewees mentioned a growing need for increased access to primary care services and providers in the community. Lack of primary care physicians was mentioned by most interviewees, especially for the low income population.</p>
Potential Response to Problem	
<p><b>Objective: Provide a point of access for primary health care services in the community.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMM will actively look to identify primary care providers and advanced practitioners, who are willing to take Medicaid, Indigent Care and Medicare patients.</li> <li>• HMM Clinics will consider extending hours and days, at certain clinic locations in order to increase access to primary care services and providers for those who are unable to seek care during normal work hours.</li> <li>• HMM will increase awareness of its primary care service offerings in the community through radio, billboard, print advertisements and social media.</li> <li>• HMM will explore opportunities to increase the primary care exposure by taking the providers out into the community.</li> <li>• HMM would look at the possibility of adding a Case Manager in the rural primary care clinics to assist with referrals to specialists and access to care.</li> <li>• HMM would look at the possibility of adding a Patient Navigator in the hospital case management department to assist with those patients with access to Primary and Specialty Care Access.</li> <li>• HMM will consider increasing access and promotion of the mobile clinic availability, health screenings, vaccination clinics, health fairs and educational services. The target population will be for Medicaid, Indigent and Medicare clients.</li> <li>• HMM will explore the opportunity to partner with SHSU Food Science, Nutrition and Dietetics Center to provide Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) and culinary medicine.</li> </ul>	

## Priority # 5

<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Access to Mental and Behavioral Health Care Services and Providers</b>	<p>Prevalence of Any Mental Illness Among US Adults (NIMH 2014) found that overall 18.1% of adults have a diagnosable mental health illness. When looking at the diagnosis codes of Huntsville Memorial hospital between July 2016 and June 2017, it was noted that 14% of the Emergency Room population had a behavioral health diagnosis, of this, 26% were classified as self-pay. Additionally, the Behavioral health population with comorbidity represent a 30 day readmission rate that was 3.21% higher than those without behavioral health diagnosis.</p> <p>Based on information available from Tri-County behavioral Healthcare, it was noted that from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017 a total of 761 Walker County residents (144 minors/617 adults) were seen by Tri-County staff for a mental health crisis assessment. Many of these assessments are provided after-hours by MCOT (Mobile Crisis Outreach Team) who travel a minimum distance of 28 miles in one direction to respond to these calls. There are also a significant portion of these individuals who refuse hospitalization, despite recommendation, due to the distance of these facilities. There are no mental health inpatient facilities in Walker County.</p> <p>Data also suggests that residents in Walker County do not have adequate access to outpatient mental and behavioral health care services and providers. Walker County has a lower rate of mental health care providers per 100,000 than the state. A significant barrier to participation in outpatient services is access to transportation.</p> <p>During the Community Health Needs Assessment, completed in June of 2017, many interviewees mentioned the overall lack of mental health services in the county despite the work of Tri-County Mental Health, particularly for adults and low income populations. Primary care physicians and the Emergency Department were seen as the main outlet for mental health services in the county according to interviews conducted in the community.</p>

### *Potential Response to Problem*

**Objective: Provide a point of access for mental health services in the community.**

- HMM could partner with Tri-County and other local entities to build a 24-hour crisis and inpatient services facility to serve Walker County.
- HMM could seek accreditation for a psychiatrist and psychiatry staff.
- HMM could look into the potential of opening a mental health wing.
- HMM, Tri-County, Walker County Sherriff's Office, and Huntsville Police could partner to explore and identify steps needed to establish CIRT (Crisis Intervention Response Team) to respond to Walker County mental health crises 24 hrs. a day, 365 days a year.
- Tri-County could look into providing transportation for under-insured and low-income individuals to get to their outpatient appointments.
- HMM, Medical Focus Group and Tri-County will explore grant opportunities to assist our county in obtaining transportation services for under-insured and low-income individuals to get to their outpatient appointments.



**Priority # 6**

<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Transportation for Medical Related Appointments</b>	<p>It was identified through the Community Health Needs Assessment completed in June of 2017, when community members were interviewed, transportation to appointments was a barrier in Walker County and surrounding counties. Data suggests that 2.2% of Walker county do not own a vehicle, and only 0.1% utilized public transportation. Travel to specialists in neighboring cities as well as other facilities with more advanced levels of care were noted as barriers to care for many residents in Walker County, as transportation issues even within the county can be a hindrance to care. Many interviewees also mentioned transportation as a primary issue restricting health care access in the county for both primary care and specialists partly due to cab rides being prohibitively expensive. The low income and elderly were noted as the two groups that are most affected by transportation barriers, which limits their accessibility to services inside the county as well as specialists in larger cities. One interviewee specifically stated: "The elderly don't have a way to get there. They can't handle the traffic in Houston (for specialist appointments). They are limited in their (health care) choices in town."</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider increasing public transportation in Walker County and surrounding Counties.</li><li>• Will explore the services provided at numerous church affiliations for transportation and identifying retiree groups who may want this for a service engagement opportunity.</li></ul>	

## Faith Based Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
Problem Identified	Data
Walker County Lacks a Community Structure that Works to Build Relationships to Improve the Quality of Life for All Its People, Especially At-Risk Children and Youth	United States Census Bureau (USCB) Walker County Juvenile Probation Ed Davis, Episcopal Diocese of Texas – Restorative Justice GSM Search Institute
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Walker County organizations have a tendency to work isolated from each other which points to the need for volunteers and mentors from various groups to work together.</li> <li>2. Walker County is experiencing a great need for funding to support qualified and experienced staff persons, recruiters, and trainers to further our goal of improving the quality of life for all our citizens</li> <li>3. With a combined effort of faith based and government funded programs, Walker county should be able to make a large impact to the citizens by eliminating the duplication of services for some while neglecting others. (This became evident during Hurricane Harvey).</li> </ol> <p><i>"The number and intensity of high quality relationships in young people's lives is linked to a broad range of positive outcomes, including increased student engagement, improved academic motivation, better grades, higher aspirations for the future, civic engagement, more frequent participation in college-preparatory classes and activities, and a variety of other individual outcomes. We also know that high-quality relationships are characterized as caring, supportive, meaningful, reciprocal, and resulting in young people's sense of agency, belonging and competence." -- From Search Institute; Developmental Relationships</i></p>	
Potential Response to Problem	
<p>Funding is needed to Implement the following which serve to build relationships that would increase the quality of life through service to all, and by all, residents of Walker County.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a Community Partnership/Coalition/Council of faith based and service group representatives (i.e. Jr. Service League, Piney Woods United Way) and state, county and municipal government representatives which would:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discern needs</li> <li>• Disseminate information</li> <li>• Eliminate informational/service silos in the community thereby reducing duplication of effort and freeing faith based and civic organizations to undertake new and innovative projects</li> <li>• Oversee coordination of recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers</li> <li>• Collect data and measure outcomes</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Create a staff person to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and maintain a service directory of 501c3 and public organizations with brief descriptions of services provided and make available on-line</li> <li>• Act as secretariat to Partnership/Coalition/Council participants</li> <li>• Direct persons to appropriate organizations, available volunteers and other resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Funding is needed to implement the following which would serve to build relationships that would increase the quality of life through service to all residents of Walker County.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a clearing house to distribute the right resources to the right person , making sure there is accountability for all services provided</li> <li>• Coordination is vital to avoid duplication of services</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	



- Capture statistics to report end results to the community and government agencies

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of Awareness of the Increasing Problem of Human Trafficking	GSM SAAFE House Huntsville Victims' Advocate HPD WCSO LEMIT WCCDA's Office
<p>Human trafficking is the largest criminal enterprise in the world, with drug trafficking being the second largest. The two frequently co-exist. Approximately one-third of all persons in this enterprise pass through Houston, TX -- often passing through Walker County on IH-45 as they travel north. There have been documented cases of Human Trafficking in Huntsville and surrounding cities.</p> <p>Sex traffickers control their victims with physical and psychological force, fraud and coercion, and often lure their victims into the trap through on-line social media. <u>The average age of victims bought and sold for sex is twelve (12) years old.</u></p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>This is not a case of "if" or "when" this criminal activity of Human Trafficking will enter our County - it is <u>here now</u>. Funds are needed in order to provide information and create awareness of human trafficking to Walker County residents -- parents, grandparents, youth, faith based organizations, school staff and administrators through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring relationships</li> <li>• Teaching Stranger/Danger Programs</li> <li>• Teaching Social Media Dangers -- for parents and youth</li> <li>• Providing affordable after school programs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Skills classes to build self-confidence and self-worth</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Promoting participation in Parent Teacher Organizations</li> <li>• Expand and continue the Chamber of Commerce "Choices" Program in public schools</li> <li>• Hotline created for the youth, including university students</li> </ul>	

Priority # 3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Increasing Number of Jobless, Homeless, and Low Income Individuals and Families	GSM SAAFE House TAC
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The need to develop an ecumenical organization united with others in the community to serve the basic needs of those in financial crisis and provide assistance towards self-sufficiency. This organization would centralize efforts and avoid duplication. While we have a few resources within our county, they are wide spread and often duplicated by the provider or by the individual seeking assistance. Examples of services which could be centralized include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Pantry</li> <li>• Homeless Assistance</li> <li>• Emergency assistance with utilities and rent</li> <li>• Skills classes and mentoring</li> <li>• Case Management</li> <li>• Additional GED Classes</li> <li>• Expand opportunity for English as a second language, using students to teach their parents</li> <li>• Utilize the existing career technology facilities at the middle school, high school and trades center to provide training for those who need additional skills with evening programs</li> </ul> <p>The median Household Income for Walker County residents is \$ 40,092 which is the lowest in the thirteen (13) H-GAC area in 2013. Our unemployment rate for 2014 was 5.4 % which is higher than the state rate. In 2014 Walker County's poverty rate stood at 25.5%.</p>	



## Education Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
Problem Identified	Data
Bullying	Tim Hooks, Director of Transportation, HISD Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) BGCWC
<p>Bullying is defined as the use of superior strength, power, or influence to intimidate someone, typically to force him or her to do what one wants. This is unwanted aggressive behavior and is found among school aged children that often involves a real or perceived power imbalance. This behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied, and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. The CDC released its study of the 2014 YRBSS. In reading this study, it was found that twenty (20%) percent of students (one in five) in grades nine through twelve (9-12) have experienced bullying.</p> <p>Cyber bullying has become a huge issue in today's society - it has led to murder and suicide among our youth - yet it does not get the attention it deserves. At present, the only public prevention program in the county is in place at the BGCWC.</p> <p>Without counseling, groups, and a medium that is able to provide age appropriate services, we will surely see the cycle of violence perpetuated into the next generation. The demand for services far outweighs available resources. Parents should be advised to report the cyber bullying to not only the principal's office at their child's school, but also the network where the abuse is happening. School counselors should be schooled in the need to intervene regarding cyber bullying. While it may take a high tech approach, cyber bullying is still abuse - and still a crime.</p> <p>For more than a decade, researchers have been exploring the prevalence and impact of various forms of peer victimization online or in the "cyber" world. Adolescents' use of new technologies such as the Internet, cell phones, and text messaging has expanded dramatically. As of 2012, ninety-five (95%) percent of teens (ages 12-17 years) were using the Internet, eighty-one (81%) percent were using some kind of social media, seventy-eight (78%) percent owned a cell phone, and seventy-five (75%) percent of teens were texting. Given that youth online communication has increased, it is not surprising that negative and harassing behaviors online, including cyberbullying, have increased as well. However, the amount of public and academic attention to cyberbullying sometimes overshadows the consistent finding that in-person peer victimization and bullying happens to youth at substantially higher rates than online victimization experiences. Furthermore, it is not clear that research has demonstrated that cyberbullying is different enough in victim experience and in impact to be considered a separate type of bullying. With too singular a focus of study on cyberbullying, researchers may be setting up a distinction that does not exist as clearly for youth themselves.</p> <p>In the May 2015 issue of the <i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i>, it was reported that twenty-three (23%) percent of youth reported being victims of any form of bullying within the last month, with twenty-five point six (25.6%) percent of those victims reporting being cyberbullied. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings is that only four point six (4.6%) percent of cyberbullying victims reported being only cyberbullied. This means that when technology is involved in bullying, it almost always occurs within the context of traditional forms of bullying. This is an important finding because, so far, much of the research on the negative impact associated with cyberbullying has studied it in isolation.</p> <p>There is recent research to suggest that harassment and bullying that happens solely online is in fact less distressing to youth than traditional harassment and bullying incidents, and that incidents that involve both in-person and online elements are most distressing.</p>	
Potential Response to Problem	

Funding is needed for continued research which incorporates technology as one possible component among many that might affect how peer harassment negatively impacts youth. By approaching the study of peer victimization with a broader view, we will provide parents, teachers, and other youth-serving professionals with more information on the incident and child-level factors that indicate the greatest risk of harm.

A constant need within Walker County is extensive prevention outreach services going into the schools and helping children understand the effect of violence. An acute awareness of what bullying is and the long-lasting effects it can have on students is needed. School counselors should be schooled in the need to intervene regarding cyber bullying and a website, or other safe means, needs to be developed that would enable the reporting of bullying without putting the accuser in danger of retaliation.



Priority #2	
Problem Identified	Data
Sexual Harassment by Texting, E-Mail, Facebook, or Other Electronic Means	American Association of University Women (AAUW) Tim Hooks, Director of Transportation, HISD
<p>Sexual harassment has long been an unfortunate part of the climate in middle and high schools in the United States. Often considered a kind of bullying, sexual harassment by definition involves sex and gender and therefore warrants separate attention. The legal definition of sexual harassment also differentiates it from bullying. Based on a nationally representative survey of students in grades seven through twelve (7-12) conducted in May and June, 2011, <i>Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School</i> provides fresh evidence about students' experiences with sexual harassment, including being harassed, harassing someone else, or witnessing harassment. Sexual harassment is part of everyday life in middle and high schools. Forty-eight (48%) percent of the students surveyed experienced some form of sexual harassment in the 2010-11 school year, and the eighty-seven (87%) percent said it had a negative effect on them. Sexual harassment by text, e-mail, Facebook, or other electronic means affected thirty (30%) percent of students. Interestingly, many of the students who were sexually harassed through cyberspace were also sexually harassed in person. Girls were more likely than boys to be sexually harassed, by a significant margin of fifty-six (56%) percent versus forty (40%) percent. Girls were more likely than boys to be sexually harassed both in person and via text, e-mail, Facebook, or other electronic means. This finding confirms previous research showing that girls are sexually harassed more frequently than boys and that girls' experiences tend to be more physical and intrusive than boys' experiences. Studies have shown that thirty (30%) percent of the students have been sexually harassed through electronic means - one-third of girls and one-quarter of boys. Twenty (20%) percent of students received a text message, e-mail, or post with unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, or pictures during the 2010-2011 school years. Twelve (12%) percent of students were called gay, or lesbian, in a negative way through e-mail, texting, Facebook, or other electronic means. Thirteen (13%) percent of students had sexual rumors spread about them through electronic means.</p>	
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>Funds are needed to create staff positions in all public funded schools that can recognize and respond to sexual harassment, to know how to help students who come to them, and to know their obligations if they witness sexual harassment. This staff should also be responsible for holding faculty meetings on topics such as what Title IX is and what the obligations and liability facing a school would be, hold workshops and assemblies, and create after-school programs addressing sexual harassment and related issues. Funds are also needed to create sexual harassment printed materials for distribution in schools and to parents and/or guardians. There is also a need for video recording and editing equipment so students could make their own public service announcements, or documentaries, about sexual harassment at their school.</p>	



Priority #3	
Problem Identified	Data
Alcohol and Drug Use (Including Nicotine and Prescription Drugs) Continue to Plague Our Younger Generation	Tim Hooks, Director of Transportation, HISD Chris Drane, High School Principal, NWISD Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) The National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)
<p>There is no single age group of people more affected by alcohol and drugs than young people. In some ways it feels like it is an issue everywhere: for you, your family, and your friends. Plain and simple, try as you might, you cannot escape the issues of alcohol and drugs. Nationwide, alcohol and drugs affect each and every one of us, directly or indirectly: in our homes, in our families, in our school, in our dorm, in our community, town or city.</p> <p>More than twenty-three (23) million people over the age of twelve (12) are addicted to alcohol and other drugs affecting millions more people.....parents, family members, friends and neighbors. Forty (40) percent of eighteen (18) to twenty-five (25) year olds take part in binge drinking - which means consuming more than four drinks in less than a two hour period. Each year hundreds die from acute alcohol poisoning brought on by binge drinking.</p> <p>Each year, more than six hundred thousand (600,000) students between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-four (24) are assaulted by another student who has been drinking. And ninety-five (95%) percent of all violent crimes on high school and college campuses involve the use of alcohol by the assailant, victim or both, while ninety (90%) percent of acquaintance rape and sexual assault on college campuses involves the use of alcohol by the assailant, victim, or both. Every day, thirty-six (36) people die, and approximately seven hundred (700) are injured, in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. Drinking and drugged driving is the number one cause of death, injury and disability of young people under the age of twenty-one (21).</p> <p><b>FACT:</b> The connection between alcohol, drugs and crime is clear. And, so is the connection between alcohol and drug <i>addiction</i> and crime. We need to break the chain that links drug addiction and crime.</p> <p>However, and not surprisingly, jail alone has had little effect on reduction of drug addiction or in promoting recovery. Holding someone in jail, without access to alcohol and drug addiction treatment, with no specific plans for treatment and recovery support upon release, is not only expensive, it's ineffective.</p> <p>For many in the criminal justice system, preventing future crime and re-arrest after release is impossible without treatment for and recovery from addiction to alcohol and drugs.</p> <p><i>"Nine years before I was elected to Congress for the first of nine terms, I woke up from my last alcoholic blackout in a jail cell, under arrest for disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. I am alive and sober today--almost 30 years later--only because I had access to treatment for my alcoholism."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former U.S. Congressman Jim Ramstad (R-MN)</li> </ul>	
Potential Response to Problem	
<p>Funds are needed for the following:</p> <p>A designated Public Safety Officer is needed who will plan annual events and programs including using an "Impaired Driving Simulator." Printed program material will be needed for attendees as well as being available as handouts during public venues such as town fairs, rodeos, trade shows, National Night Out, etc. Funds are needed to present the "Shattered Dreams" program to all junior high and high schools within the county. The driving simulator can also allow a student to drive in a simulated drunk, or drug induced, mode. These simulators are needed to facilitate our</p>	



ongoing need to reach our young people – the future of our county.

In response to the facts stated above, a Drug Court program needs to be developed and implemented for Walker County. This Drug Court would be judicially-supervised in order to strike the proper balance between the need to protect community safety and the need to improve public health and well-being; between the need for treatment and the need to hold people accountable for their actions; between hope and redemption on the one hand and good citizenship on the other.

Imprisonment has little effect on alcohol and drug abuse. Approximately ninety-five (95%) percent of inmates return to alcohol and drug use after release from prison. Providing treatment without holding offenders accountable for their performance in treatment is expensive and ineffective. Unless they are regularly supervised by a judge, sixty to eighty (60% – 80%) percent drop out of treatment prematurely and few successfully graduate.

Walker County recognizes the serious impact of alcohol and drug use on crime across our county. To combat this impact, we need to have in place long term recovery. But, we also know, from decades of experience, thousands of people who have been in the criminal justice system have broken the chain through long-term recovery from alcohol and drug addiction.

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
School Safety Concerns	Tim Hooks, Director of Transportation, HISD National School Safety Center (NSSC)
<p>There is a rising concern for the safety of our children while they are attending school – either public or private. The NSSC, in its publication, "School Crisis Prevention and Response," recommends that school districts pursue an array of crime and violence prevention strategies, including incentives or encouragements for students to report suspicious and criminal activity. The NSSC states that such programs are an important part of a comprehensive school-based violence prevention strategy. Anonymous hotlines or similar services allow students to report incidents of crime, weapons, or drug violations in schools, thus reducing fear of retribution and preventing additional incidents. Callers anonymously report the presence of weapons or drugs, crimes they have witnessed, or pending fights among students. Donations and some school funds are used to support rewards for reports. Rewards typically are between \$25.00 and \$100.00, depending on the resources available to the program and the information given in the report. This hotline could be patterned after the Walker County Crime Stopper program.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>The expense of establishing the reporting system can present a challenge for our school systems. Reporting systems need at least one dedicated phone line, or more, if the school is large or the system is heavily used. There has to be training for school and/or law enforcement personnel who staff the system and referred calls about serious incidents to the police could become an additional required expense.</p>	

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Discipline Policies in Public School Districts	Ed Davis, Episcopal Diocese of Texas- Restorative Justice International Institute of Restorative Justice Travis Smiley Report Wallace Jefferson, Chief Justice, Texas Supreme Court
<p>Severe discipline policies and practices in our schools can: turn children against authority figures and the legal system, lead to a greater number of drop-outs, cause a loss of revenue to the school districts, and lead to youth being a part of the criminal justice system. It has been found that the drop-out rate can be directly tied to expulsion, In School Suspension (ISS), and referral to the criminal justice system. Punishment is not the same as accountability, nor does it necessarily educate an offending student as to the harm their conduct has caused. Restorative practices are designed to heal relationships. As school revenue is directly tied to attendance, it is understood that suspension and/or expulsion will adversely affect school revenue.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Funding is needed to create and implement a Restorative Practice Group that will, among other things, train SROs, principals, teachers, and students in the informal and formal Restorative Practices.</p>	



## Veterans Affairs Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Mental Health Services for Veterans is Needed in Walker County</b>	<b>Rebecca Bowden, LEMIT/FUMC/SHSU</b> <b>David Yebra, SHSU</b> <b>Mark Robinson</b> <b>Pam Patterson, DSHS</b> <b>Ashley Taylor, TCBHC – Veterans Affairs</b>
<p>By 2019, Texas will have the largest population of veterans in the United States. This could translate into the fact that we may end up having the largest population of veterans that require mental health services. We must ensure strong, community-based programs are affordable and accessible.</p> <p>The Texas DSHS has begun to enhance veteran mental health programs throughout Texas by creating chapters known as Military Veteran Peer Network (mvpn.org). This is a good first step, and Walker County should organize around developing appropriate resources to address the mental health needs of our veterans and their families.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Funds need to be made available through a grant that would establish a mental health program to assist disabled veterans who have Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and/or Traumatic Brain Injuries to receive the treatment they need.</p>	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Lack of Support for Veterans' Spouses and Children in Walker County</b>	<b>Rebecca Bowden, LEMIT/FUMC/SHSU</b> <b>David Yebra, SHSU</b> <b>Mark Robinson,</b> <b>Pam Patterson, DSHS</b> <b>Ashley Taylor, TCBHC – Veterans Affairs</b> <b>Elisa Borah, Research Associate, Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health, University of Texas at Austin (UTA)**</b>
<p>Because Texas has the second largest population of veterans, and will have the largest number of veterans by 2019, Walker County should set the standard for how we treat our veterans' families. We need to address their families' employment, education, and mental health care needs. We must ensure strong community-based programs that are not only affordable, but also accessible.</p> <p>Spouses and children of veterans do not receive special consideration for employment and educational opportunities, yet they deserve them as much as the veterans. Many have delayed higher education or employment, or they have been underemployed throughout their loved one's service because of frequent moves and absences due to training and deployment. Then when the veteran returns home disabled, the job of caregiver often falls upon the family.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>The Texas Hazelwood Act provides qualified veterans with up to one hundred fifty (15) hours of tuition exception at higher education institutions in Texas, but nothing for spouses and children who only receive these benefits if the veteran died in the line of duty (there are several other qualifiers). Under the Veterans Choice Act, Texas now offers in-state tuition and fees to qualifying veterans. The immediate families of these veterans should also be extended the opportunity to resume their education.</p> <p>Funds are needed to fill in the "gaps" that legislation has failed to address. Congress has acknowledged the need for services for veterans' families but little action has been taken. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs discussed changing the model in a 2008 congressional hearing where they were told that care should focus on the whole family, not just the veteran. But more than seven (7) years later, not much has changed.</p> <p>Funds for qualifying veterans could be handled by the local Veterans Affairs Advisory Board, Walker County Veteran's Affairs Office, or the local DSHS office.</p> <p><b>**Used by permission</b></p>	



Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>Need for Adapted Physical Activity for Veterans and Citizens in Walker County</b>	<b>Ashley Taylor, TCBHC - Veterans Affairs Rebecca Bowden, LEMIT / FUMC / SHSU Sandra Clifton, YMCA David Yebra, SHSU</b>
<p>There are too many veterans returning home with physical disabilities and are not getting the continued help they need. They also need available physical activity that is adapted to sports (such as wheel chair basketball and volleyball).</p> <p>The local YMCA started an Adaptive Physical Activity project in the spring of 2015 that centered on baseball for citizens and veterans with physical disabilities. At this time the YMCA is planning for future activities, however, they are in dire need of specialized equipment, storage for the equipment, and funds to develop a field they have acquired to accommodate baseball, soccer, and other field sports.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>The Huntsville YMCA, which offers programs to all of Walker County, needs funds to expand their Adaptive Physical Activity program. In the near future, they will need specialized wheel chairs, limb support equipment, and athletic equipment. At this time, they have a large lot available for use, but funds are needed to transition this from an empty field into a productive area where baseball and soccer games could be held.</p>	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<b>There is a Need of Prosthetic Support for Walker County Disabled Citizens and Veterans</b>	<b>Rebecca Bowden, LEMIT / FUMC / SHSU David Yebra, SHSU Mark Robinson, HEARTS, COP Ashley Taylor, TCBHC - Veterans Affairs Project Intrepid / Center for the Intrepid</b>
<p>The Students from the Elliot T. Bower's Honors College are leading the effort designed to maximize the resources available at SHSU to assist our Veterans in achieving the independence they seek. Project Intrepid, as the initiative is called, works to provide 3D manufactured devices needed to achieve physical independence. Project Intrepid, as the initiative is called, works to provide 3D manufactured devices needed to achieve physical independence. The prosthetics that our Veterans receive enable our Wounded Warriors to accomplish most of their day to day tasks. There is still a need for devices to augment the prosthetics they receive to further enhance their independence. Working with the SHSU Center for Innovation and Technology, and local leaders, Project Intrepid looks to fill a need to develop specialized devices to augment the capability of current prosthetics. The project includes periodic team meetings, communication with the Center for the Intrepid, San Antonio, Texas, Veterans, and the marketing for future projects. The opportunity to work with the family members of our Wounded Warriors offers a unique experience by involving them in the process, meet some of their respective needs, and enable them to benefit therapeutically from the journey. Project Intrepid is also working to develop 3D manufactured devices to help our students here at SHSU. The devices are designed to help our students with some of their day to day needs such as support for an umbrella or to hold a cell phone.</p> <p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p> <p>There needs to be assistance in getting more prosthetic devices to our veterans who have lost partial, or whole, limbs while serving our country and to those citizens who are not veterans. This could be done with funds going through the Elliot T. Bowers Honors College at SHSU.</p>	



## Resources Available

Included below are resources identified by the Walker County Community Planning Team that are available to provide services that could potentially help in closing criminal justice and public safety gaps:

<b><i>Veteran Affairs:</i></b>		
<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Walker County Veteran's Affairs Advisory Board	Non Profit	Veteran's Affairs
Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare	State	Veteran's Mental Health Services
<b><i>Juvenile Justice:</i></b>		
<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Walker County Juvenile Services	County	Juvenile Probation
City of Huntsville Municipal Court	City	Municipal Court
Walker County Criminal District Attorney's Office	County	Prosecution and Victim Services
Justices of the Peace Pcts. 1, 2, 3 & 4	County	Precinct Courts
<b><i>Law Enforcement:</i></b>		
<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Walker County Sheriff's Office	County	Law Enforcement
Huntsville Police Department	City	Law Enforcement
Sam Houston State University Police Department	State	Law Enforcement
Huntsville Fire Department	City	Code Enforcement
Walker County Criminal District Attorney's Office	County	Prosecution
Walker County Public Safety Communications Center	County	Communications
<b><i>Victim Services:</i></b>		



<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
SAAFE House	Non Profit	Community Resource
Walker county Juvenile Services	County	Juvenile Probation
Boys & Girls Club of Walker County	Non Profit	Community Resource
Gulf Coast Trades Center	Non Profit	Juvenile Services
<b><i>Educational Services:</i></b>		
<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Huntsville I.S.D.	State	School System
New Waverly I.S.D.	State	School System
Education Service Center – Region VI	State	Education Support
Sam Houston State University	State	University
<b><i>Medical / Health Services / Substance Abuse:</i></b>		
<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Texas Dept. of State Health Services	State	Health Services
SAAFE House	Non Profit	Community Resource
Physician's ER	Private Sector	Medical Care Services
Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare	Non Profit	Mental Health Services
Huntsville Memorial Hospital	Private Sector	Medical Care Services
<b><i>Faith Based / Intervention / Prevention:</i></b>		
<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
SAAFE House	Non Profit	Community Resource
Justices of the Peace, Pcts. 1, 2, 3 & 4	County	J.P. Courts
Boys & Girls Club of walker County	Non Profit	Community Resource
Y.M.C.A.	Non Profit	Community Resource
Gulf Coast Trades Center	Non Profit	Community Resource
First united Methodist Church Human Trafficking Core Group	Non Profit	Christian Ministry

## **Interagency Cooperation**

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The following is a description of how the various resources listed in the previous pages could cooperatively work together to accomplish the goal of closing identified gaps in services:

**As can be seen in the previous pages, our resources and services literally stretch from county line to county line and from city to city. Therefore, communications between each of these resources and services is of utmost importance – not just to the Walker County Community Planning Team, but also to the citizens of our county. Agencies within Walker County seek to provide those services which meet the needs of individuals, and families, who are in crisis due to gaps in criminal justice issues. As these gaps in services are recognized, they will be conveyed to every member of the Planning Group so referrals can be expedited to the available agencies for immediate and appropriate action. These gaps are then presented to the Walker County Community Planning Team for inclusion in the new Plan. Every effort is used to insure a continuous flow of ideas to the Focal Groups and the Community Planning Coordinator. We also highly encourage participation from all citizens within Walker County.**



## **Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation**

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The Walker County Community Planning Team works in conjunction with other planning groups in the county to ensure a regular exchange of ideas. Individuals active in the planning process generally serve on many of these committees and share mutual concerns.

The Walker County Community Planning Team strives to meet periodically to review the Plan and make necessary additions and deletions. At least one formal meeting of the entire group is held each fall, but agency and community representatives typically submit suggestions and changes via telephone and e-mail throughout the year to the Community Planning Coordinator.

Drafts and annual updates of the Community Plan are circulated by e-mail with requests for comments, changes, etc. Wherever possible, e-mail is used to reduce the need for meetings, printing, postage, etc.

It is the intent of the Community Planning Group to improve outcomes for Walker County families struggling with problems described in the Plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Walker County agencies and organizations to address problems with local funds as well as grant funds from multiple state and federal sources. To the extent that these funds are available, the Community Planning Team will continue to encourage agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

## **Contact Information**

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This Plan is available on-line at the following URL address:

**[www.co.walker.tx.us](http://www.co.walker.tx.us)**

Once on the Walker County Web Page, insert "Community Plan" in the search engine box and this will take you to the current Plan.

## **Acronyms:**

<b>AAUW</b>	<b>American Association of University Women</b>
<b>BGCWC</b>	<b>Boys and Girls Club of Walker County</b>
<b>CDC</b>	<b>Center for Disease Control</b>
<b>CDF</b>	<b>Children's Defense Fund</b>
<b>CERT</b>	<b>Community Emergency Response Team</b>
<b>CMIT</b>	<b>Correctional Management Institute of Texas</b>
<b>COH</b>	<b>City of Huntsville</b>
<b>COP</b>	<b>Citizens on Patrol (SO)</b>
<b>DSHS</b>	<b>Department of State Health Services</b>
<b>EMC</b>	<b>Emergency Management Coordinator</b>
<b>FBI</b>	<b>Federal Bureau of Investigation</b>
<b>FMS</b>	<b>Federal Medical Station</b>
<b>FUMC</b>	<b>First United Methodist Church</b>
<b>GCTC</b>	<b>Gulf Coast Trade Center</b>
<b>GSM</b>	<b>Good Shepherd Mission</b>
<b>HEARTS</b>	<b>Helping Every American Remember Through Service</b>
<b>HFD</b>	<b>Huntsville Fire Department</b>
<b>HISD</b>	<b>Huntsville Independent School District</b>
<b>HMH</b>	<b>Huntsville Memorial Hospital</b>
<b>HPD</b>	<b>Huntsville Police Department</b>
<b>IIHS</b>	<b>Insurance Institute for Highway Safety</b>
<b>ISS</b>	<b>In School Suspension</b>
<b>JP</b>	<b>Justice of the Peace</b>
<b>LEMIT</b>	<b>Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas</b>
<b>NCADD</b>	<b>National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence, Inc.</b>
<b>NHTSA</b>	<b>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration</b>
<b>NSSC</b>	<b>National School Safety Center</b>
<b>NWISD</b>	<b>New Waverly Independent School District</b>
<b>OEM</b>	<b>Office of Emergency Management</b>
<b>PALS</b>	<b>Preparing for Adult Living Services</b>
<b>PSO</b>	<b>Public Safety Officer</b>
<b>PTO</b>	<b>Parent Teacher Organization</b>
<b>PTSS</b>	<b>Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome</b>
<b>PWUW</b>	<b>Piney Woods United Way</b>
<b>RAINN</b>	<b>Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network</b>
<b>SAAFE</b>	<b>Sexual Assault and Abuse Free Environment</b>
<b>SADD</b>	<b>Students Against Destructive Decisions</b>
<b>SAR</b>	<b>Search and Rescue</b>



<b>SHSU</b>	<b>Sam Houston State University</b>
<b>SRO</b>	<b>School Resource Officer</b>
<b>STAFS</b>	<b>Southeast Texas Applied Forensic Science</b>
<b>TAASA</b>	<b>Texas Association Against Sexual Assault</b>
<b>TABC</b>	<b>Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission</b>
<b>TAC</b>	<b>Texas Association of Counties</b>
<b>TCBHC</b>	<b>Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare</b>
<b>TCFV</b>	<b>Texas Council on Family Violence</b>
<b>TDCJ</b>	<b>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</b>
<b>UCR</b>	<b>Unified Crime Reporting</b>
<b>USCB</b>	<b>United States Census Bureau</b>
<b>UTA</b>	<b>University of Texas at Austin</b>
<b>WCCDA</b>	<b>Walker County Criminal District Attorney</b>
<b>WCPSCC</b>	<b>Walker County Public Safety Communications Center</b>
<b>WCSO</b>	<b>Walker County Sheriff's Office</b>
<b>YMCA</b>	<b>Young Men's Christian Association</b>
<b>YRBSS</b>	<b>Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System</b>