

Deflection program soon starts in East Central Illinois

Program aims to help people beat addiction and keep out of court system

By Dominik Stallings

A new program, dubbed “Deflection,” reduces the number of people entering the criminal justice system by directing them to the behavioral health system.

Deflection is now being introduced in East Central Illinois, including Douglas County.

Douglas County Sheriff Nathan Chaplin said, “I’m excited to get it going and get it started. Anything that cuts into recidivism is good.”

Five other counties in East Central Illinois completed the first step on July 12 when several community groups, police, treatment organizations and other community leaders met together and were introduced to the concept of Deflection.

Leanna Morgan, Douglas County ROSC coordinator, said, “I’m really excited to see our collaborations and see what we can do. And just improving what we’ve been doing.”

Koren VanderWeele, program manager for Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), said that Deflection is meant to prevent people from being involved in a crisis situation due to substance abuse or mental health issues. She said it is an early, upstream strategy that can help prevent crises, overdoses, arrests, and other difficult situations.

Deflection has also been described as a “third option” for police officers. Without Deflection, the only two options are arrest or don’t arrest.

Acting Lieutenant of Investigative Support Command, Brandon Grzechowiak from the Illinois State Police, said that when he was on patrol, he would often see the same faces over and over again. “It was generational and we run out of options,” said Grzechowiak.

He said he handed out pamphlets when possible, but they weren’t always effective. He noticed that people also couldn’t get into treatment due to a lack of resources.

Chaplin said that he personally has been frustrated by situations where an arrest wasn’t possible or the right solution, but there was a problem that

still needed addressing.

Illinois State Police Captain John Edwards said, “There is no downside to Deflection.”

Edwards said that it allows drug task forces to put resources where they need to be.

With Deflection, police can call a Deflection specialist who will get in contact with an individual and use “relentless engagement.” Deflection Specialist Kelly Buchanan explained that a specialist will call a person every day and even visit them in order to establish a rapport. When contact is made they help with immediate needs such as clothing or food. Continued contact is important to building trust. Buchanan said people aren’t always ready for treatment right away, but with a rapport built over time, it is easier for individuals to find help through the specialist.

VanderWeele said that Deflection can reach 61.5 million people in Illinois when fully implemented.

A similar concept to Deflection is Diversion. The goal is the same: keep people out of the criminal justice system and get them treatment for substance abuse issues. With Diversion, however, individuals are still being arrested and have a conviction on file.

VanderWeele said that pre-adjudication diversion currently reaches 10 million people while post-adjudication diversion reaches 6.9 million people

Pre-adjudication diversion can help people who have been arrested for drug charges by allowing them to complete programs such as counseling or probation, after which courts or prosecutors will withdraw charges.

It is a similar situation with post-adjudication diversion, which requires a guilty plea from the defendant. However, the conviction will still be on a person’s record.

VanderWeele said that Deflection acts as a “warm handoff” for people to receive treatment sooner. She said that currently the average wait time from first-responder encounter to treatment is six weeks.

“A lot can happen in six

weeks. You could OD (overdose), or get arrested,” said VanderWeele.

Police officers would not have to change much in their day-to-day business. VanderWeele said they just have about 10 percent of the workload with Deflection, as they only have to identify the individual and refer them.

The other 90 percent is done by Deflection specialists who work on assessment, referral, placement into treatment, monitoring, reporting and recovery support. The work done by police officers is still crucial, as the police officers are the “tip of the spear” and actually see community members in their day-to-day work.

In the next two months during Phase 2, TASC will work together with communities to come up with a comprehensive plan to implement Deflection. Afterward, in Phase 3, they will implement the program in small steps, making it as simple as possible. The process can take about six months and includes training of all sorts.

TASC, facilitated through the Department of Human Services, will hire Deflection specialists locally in the area, said VanderWeele. The funding for TASC and the services come from the Cannabis taxes, according to VanderWeele.

The implementation of Deflection also depends heavily on the needs of a community. There are six defined “pathways to treatment” under Deflection.

1. Self-referral is where the individual contacts law enforcement for treatment without fear of arrest.
2. Active outreach, where the Deflection team intentionally seeks out individuals.
3. Naloxone plus, where the engagement with treatment is part of an overdose response.
4. First responder referral, where law enforcement initiates treatment from a call for service. Importantly, no charges are filed.
5. Officer Intervention referral includes treatment engagement from a call for services where charges are held in abeyance, with a require-

RISE offers substance use services

By Dominik Stallings

RISE Behavioural Health and Wellness’ new outpatient service may help people struggling with addiction.

RISE Director Lauren Christine explained that they are licensed to provide substance use prevention and recovery services. The services are comprehensive at all levels and can include connecting clients with community services to take advantage of different resources, individual therapy and family support sessions.

RISE is able to provide the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) level 1 and level 2 programs for clients. Level 0.5 includes early intervention treatment. Level 1 includes outpatient services, and level 2 includes intensive outpatient services or partial hospitalization.

Amina Feder will be the substance use provider for RISE to provide those levels of care. Feder said she utilizes a creative, engaging, trauma-informed, strengths-based and client-centered approach that equips clients with individualized skills to help them meet personal goals and needs.

Feder has worked at the Sexual Assault Counseling and Information Service (SACIS) as the Director of Pre-

vention Services in Charleston for seven years. During that time, she provided local schools, families, and individuals with body safety, consent, and boundary programming and resources to help prevent and respond to sexual violence. According to Feder, she saw a lot of correlation between substance abuse and trauma and sexual abuse.

Each client who works with RISE goes through an assessment to see exactly what level of care is needed, said Christine. They look at coping strategies and relationships and try to build those up. They also do training to resist urges. The assessment looks at a person’s background to figure out what kind of treatment would be most effective. Christine said that trauma has a large amount to do with addiction. They see how their trauma impacts them today and how they use substances to cope.

“It’s a lot of planning and implementation on your own, but that’s hard to do. And it helps people get confident to do that,” said Christine.

RISE is in a unique position to provide “continuity of care,” according to Christine. Since RISE also provides mental health services, cli-

ents don’t have to go to several different places to get the treatment they need.

“Having it all in-house increases the accessibility of the program,” said Christine.

Christine said RISE accepts Medicaid insurance. They also use a sliding fee scale if patients don’t have coverage.

“We do not turn people away,” said Christine, “It is important to us to provide these services to the community.”

RISE also helps to link clients with the community so they have an additional support structure. Christine said they work with partners like food banks and different churches to provide needs such as food and housing. There are also recovery groups and peer recovery systems that can provide additional assistance, such as the several Alcoholics Anonymous found throughout Douglas County.

RISE is also offering DUI and substance-use services to Douglas County. They are working together with Douglas County Probation and the Hour House in Charleston.

If you or someone you know needs support, reach out to RISE Behavioral Health and Wellness at 217-253-4731.

Dollar General awards grant to Lake Land for ESI

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation recently awarded Lake Land College an \$8,500 grant to support adult literacy in English Language Acquisition classes. This grant is a part of the Foundation’s largest, one-day literacy donation of more than \$13 million throughout 47 states.

Lake Land College’s English language acquisition classes introduce non-native speakers to the English language and equip them with the skills necessary to function in American society. The program’s courses help students develop English speaking and listening skills through conversational English, phonics, and written and oral reports.

Shannon McGregor, Lake Land’s director of adult and alternative education, said, “All students, no matter their language or learning level,

are welcome to attend our English language classes. We offer ESL classes throughout the district in Arthur, Charleston, Effingham, Mattoon, Marshall, and Shelbyville. This grant will help us purchase necessary items to bring learning resources to our students.”

“It is a joy to celebrate this announcement during our 30th anniversary year,” said Denine Torr, executive director of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. “For three decades, DGLF’s investment in community programs has created meaningful access to literacy skills for adults, children and families alike and exemplified Dollar General’s mission of serving others. We look forward to seeing these literacy grants inspire reading and build brighter futures.”

Rose’s legislation to protect child victims signed into law

SPRINGFIELD- A new law will ensure that young victims of violent crimes won’t be re-traumatized when they seek justice through the criminal justice system. The law, sponsored by State Senator Chapin Rose (R-Mahomet), allows victims under the age of 13 to testify remotely in most cases.

“Children should never be a victim of a crime, but, unfortunately, when it does occur, they shouldn’t be retraumatized again by being forced to testify while their attacker stares them down in a courtroom,” said Rose.

House Bill 2607 creates a legal mechanism to allow victims under the age of 13 to

testify outside the courtroom, with the testimony shown in the courtroom via a closed-circuit television system.

The legislation was inspired by constituents of Senator Rose who were forced to take legal action to prevent their child from being required to testify against their abuser in court, rather than via closed

circuit TV.

“The legal process they were forced to go through served to make a terrible situation even worse,” Rose concluded. “I hope this new law will spare families from having to go through that experience in the future.”

The legislation was signed into law by the Governor.

Theater

Continued from page 1

and connections from the original Blue Gate Musicals partnership out of Shipshewana, Indiana and Nashville, Tenn., Yoder reunited with writer and composer Wally Nason. Together, they believed that the theater was worth bringing back to central Illinois. Nason, of Franklin, Tenn., pitched two story musicals for the Arthur area and Yoder loved the connection and tie-in to area businesses and attractions.

Nason writes and composes musicals that are loved and have a proven track record in Blue Gate Theatre (Shipshewana, Ind.), Ohio Star Theater

(Sugarcreek, Ohio) Bird-in-Hand Stage (Lancaster, Pa.), said Yoder. “We attract tour buses and families always looking for something fun and wholesome to do together. And this is the answer.”

With an exciting new venue change-Penn Station, located at 120 E. Progress Street in Arthur, Yoder continued, “Area businesses and restaurants will welcome the tourism and local traffic that come to the theatre shows. The shows are so heartwarming — Wally Nason is a creative genius and brings to life the music and story through education, emotion and wit about the simplicities of the rural upbringing and surrounding Amish lifestyle.”

The first show, The Legend of Noah Zark: a 2 by 2 Mystery Musical, runs July 22-October 28. Tickets are on sale now at www.CassConceptsProductions.com

About The Legend of Noah Zark: a 2 by 2 Mystery Musical

The biggest mystery has struck Amish Country of Illinois! Noah Zark (his parents were funny) was a farmer... had always been a farmer... and loved being a farmer. But then God told him to open an antique store. He didn’t know anything about running a business, and his financial situation reflected that. And he certainly never thought he would

be the number one suspect in the local crime of the century. When two one-of-a kind flamingo salt and pepper shakers are stolen, it would only make sense that Noah would be the one to snatch them. He could sell them and pay off all his debt. The local townspeople think he’s crazy, the local police think he’s a thief, and his family is concerned about their financial future. What is the master plan in all this?

From the writer & composer of “The Confession Musical” and “Half-Stitched: The Musical” comes Noah and the quirky group of local folk who frequent his store in this 90-minute mystery musical filled with twists and turns and tales and tunes.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

N	E	O	V		S	B	O	R	V	K		
S	E	V	I	T	V	N	I	B	O	N	E	
S	E	V	N	V	N	V						
S	E	B	V	I	T		S	T	L	N	D	V
						I	P					
						U	V	O	I	D		
						B	V	N	V	N		
						E	W	M		L	I	V
						O	V	E	O			
N	E	D	E			S	W	V	I	M		
V	K	V							O	R		
D	E	V	I	T		S			R	I	E	V
D	E	K				S	N	O	I	T		
						S	N	O	I	T		
						G	N	O	T	O		

6	7	6	5	3	8	2	8	4
4	2	5	7	8	6	9	1	3
8	3	1	2	6	4	7	6	5
1	9	7	4	2	8	3	5	6
6	4	3	9	7	5	8	2	1
5	8	2	1	6	3	4	9	7
3	1	4	8	5	9	6	7	2
2	6	8	3	1	7	5	4	9
7	5	9	6	4	2	1	3	8