

## MEMO

**To:** Members, Senate Finance Committee  
c/o Senate Finance Co-Chairs Senator von Imhof and Senator Stedman  
**From:** Mike Abbott, CEO  
**Date:** February 5, 2020  
**Re:** Follow up to questions from the January 30 Senate Finance Committee meeting

---

Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority provided an update to the committee on Thursday, January 30. During the meeting, there was a question from Senator Bishop related to our work to improve Alaska's continuum of care for those experiencing a psychiatric crisis. Specifically, Senator Bishop asked for data illustrating the success and cost savings Maricopa County, AZ experienced after implementing the Crisis Now model.

In response, I offer the following information.

- In 2016, metro area Phoenix law enforcement engaged 22,000 patients and transferred them directly to crisis facilitates and mobile crisis units without visiting an emergency department.
- What difference did this make?
  - Reduced potential state inpatient spend by \$260million
  - Per 2017 Arizona data, this saved the equivalent of 37 FTE Police Officers
  - Saved hospital emergency departments \$37million in avoided costs/losses
  - Reduced total psychiatric boarding by 45 years. (Calculated from "impact of psychiatric patient boarding in EDs" (2012) (Nicks & Manthey).

Source: <https://crisisnow.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TheCrisisNowDifference-PaperCover.jpg>

I also want to share a recently released report that the Trust commissioned that conceptualizes the implementation of the Crisis Now model in Alaska. The report identifies existing gaps in services, and examines demand, optimization, feasibility and conceptual costs of implementing this model, as well as the policy and regulatory steps that should be considered.

Full Report: <https://alaskamentalhealthtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RI-Crisis-Now-Alaska-Consultation-Report-12.27.19.pdf>

If the committee has additional questions, please feel free to contact our office.