

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

POPULATION: 908,049¹

URBAN/RURAL POPULATION: 98.03 PERCENT/1.97 PERCENT²



In September 2017, the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA), the **National Association of Counties** (NACo) and the **Laura and John Arnold Foundation** (LJAF) hosted the Data-Driven Justice and Behavioral Health Design Institute (Design Institute) in Rockville, Md. The Design Institute convened 13 teams committed to the Data-Driven Justice (DDJ) initiative. Teams were selected through a competitive process to work directly with expert faculty in facilitated sessions and workshops to create action plans for developing and using integrated data systems that would aid their jurisdictions in identifying high utilizers of jails and crisis services. This case study is part of a series highlighting counties that participated in the Design Institute.

GETTING STARTED

When Prince George's County applied to the Design Institute, it already knew the importance of using data to drive local decision-making. County Executive Rushern Baker III launched CountyStat in 2012 to improve the county's ability to demonstrate progress and deliver results by using data from every county agency to measure performance and develop "feedback loops." These feedback loops are repeating processes where data analysis is not only a mechanism for accountability but also a catalyst that informs agency and system improvements. A key component of CountyStat is "Data Prince George's," an online data portal that is available to public users. The portal gives residents the ability to access data on county government services and operations, including public safety and human services, and see where the county stands on meeting goals and objectives for each of its agencies. CountyStat is designed to create a more fiscally responsible, accountable and transparent county government.

Although using and sharing data is a central component of operations in Prince George's County, the county would like to develop standard operating procedures for integrating data across multiple agencies and departments to more effectively identify and divert high utilizers—also called frequent utilizers—from the justice system. Each agency within the justice, human services and health systems uses its own independent data system and data are collected manually by some agencies.

This creates a challenge for automating data sharing because it requires data to be accessible in an electronic format.

At the Design Institute, Prince George's County identified several needs to improve how it identifies high utilizers and coordinates their connection to treatment and support services, including determining what information should be collected electronically and what data should be integrated, as well as implementing a data platform that would allow for real-time data sharing. Ultimately, the county wants to create synergy between a wide range of county government agencies and partners, forge alliances between data owners and develop a system-wide approach to diversion.

MAKING PROGRESS BY LEVERAGING RESOURCES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Consistent with county leaders' overall interest in being data-driven, Prince George's County is leveraging data to enhance decision-making and resource allocation in its health and justice systems. The county prioritizes the collection of data and use of technology in its Health Enterprise Zone (HEZ) project. HEZ is designed to improve health outcomes by expanding the number of medical providers available to more than 10,000 county residents living in one area of the county where health care access has historically been limited. The

county collects performance data to assess its progress in meeting HEZ project goals, including reducing emergency room visits, and one of the project's milestones is to create a health information exchange that will allow private medical providers to link their electronic health record systems to Prince George's County Health Department's (PGCHD) records. Among other uses, this record system linkage will allow the county to better understand what resources residents in the area need such as patient navigation and care coordination services.

Prince George's County is already in the process of sharing data across health, social services and corrections departments through Efforts to Outcomes (ETO). ETO is a case management and data platform that combines information from each of the three departments' data systems to track service provision pre- and post-release for individuals who pass through the county's jail system. It also allows the three

departments to coordinate referrals to programs available through partner service providers.

One way the county is currently working to enhance its response to high utilizers is through Mobile Integrated Health-care (MIHC), which is operated by the county's fire and emergency medical services (EMS) department. The program uses a team of paramedics and nurses to assess county residents who are frequently involved in 911 calls, which is defined as five or more 911 calls in a six-month period. The goal of the program is to identify the health care needs of residents and then connect them with the appropriate providers as a better, lower-cost alternative to using ambulance services and going to the emergency room. To make appropriate connections to providers, MIHC collaborates with PGCHD, local hospitals, insurance groups and other health care agencies.

MIHC has been attributed to a 60 percent reduction in 911 calls in 2017 from 2016. The program uses other measures of effectiveness, including reductions in hospital visits and admissions, referrals to allied health or social services programs and utilization of primary care providers. The program currently costs the county \$138,000 a year, which mainly covers salaries for two positions.

The county hopes to take the core concepts of MIHC and apply them to the homeless population. The idea is to send street outreach teams to unsheltered individuals when they are the subject of a call for police, fire or EMS services. The homeless outreach team could then make referrals to supportive and assistive services. This new strategy would also give the county a way to identify homeless individuals who are not known to the social services system, but could be frequent utilizers of other systems.

Prince George's County is also focused on keeping better track of chronically homeless individuals who are in jail. By U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards, individuals lose their chronically homeless status—and their related federal housing benefits—if they are in jail for more than 90 days. The county wants to not only identify who in jail is homeless before day 91 to prevent the loss of eligibility, which would then have to be reestablished, but also to help place them in permanent housing. Accomplishing this goal requires information sharing between the county's corrections and social services departments. The county currently depends on manual case coordination between multiple agencies involved in the health, human services and justice systems, including street outreach teams, which are coordinated by the county through a large network of public, private and faith-based organizations.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY QUICK FACTS

\$469.1M
TOTAL JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY EXPENDITURES



\$24.7M
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES EXPENDITURES



\$71.8M
TOTAL HEALTH & HOSPITAL EXPENDITURES



525
TOTAL HOMELESS POPULATION



MOVING FORWARD AND ADVANCING NEW IDEAS

Data sharing is one part of the county's strategy to create a robust and responsive housing infrastructure that supports justice-involved individuals experiencing homelessness. Through a HUD and U.S. Department of Justice grant, Prince George's County is working with the American Institutes for Research to use Pay for Success (PFS) to finance and develop permanent supportive housing for frequent utilizers. Prince George's County considers PFS a complement to its involvement in the DDJ initiative, as PFS leverages many of the system interactions and data integration efforts the county is already working to strengthen through DDJ.

Because data play a fundamental role in determining how payments are distributed in PFS programs, the county had to evaluate the availability of necessary and sufficient data from each county department that is involved in the identification of high utilizers and the ultimate delivery of supportive housing and services. To begin this work, the county had to determine if there was enough identifying data in each independent information system that could be used to match common cases. The county also completed the task of inventorying the data stored in seven major data systems used by EMS, the jail, civil procedures court, homeless services, health providers and law enforcement to develop a better understanding of what information is collected and how it could be used to track individuals and the services they receive.

Prince George's County is currently developing an Application Processing Interface (API), which allows computers to send and receive requests for information stored in an agency's data system. The API will allow county staff and others with data system access to get information that is found and stored in another agency's system while allowing each individual agency to keep its current system. Because the API is a tool to facilitate cross-system communication, data system owners control privacy and security settings that guard access to sensitive information. A data sharing agreement is in place among the partners that push and pull data to and from a software platform using the API. The county has three goals for how to use the information pulled from distinct data systems through the API, including to identify individuals who have had previous system contacts, to inform case-level decision-making and diversion and to analyze trends and other patterns of system interactions that can lead to a better understanding of the risk factors for high system utilization.

To sustain the county's efforts to address the needs of frequent utilizers, Prince George's County is participating in a new Assistance in Community Integration Services pilot program that was created through Maryland's 1115 Medicaid demonstration waiver. The program will serve high-risk, high-utilizing Medicaid beneficiaries who have four or more emergency visits per year or have two or more chronic conditions—including mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders—and are at risk of institutional placement or homelessness following release from a publicly funded institution such as a health care facility, jail or other corrections program. The state released a request for applications to which local government entities could respond. As a condition of participation in the pilot, the county must fund 50 percent of the pilot program costs using local dollars.

Prince George's County is making significant progress in using data to improve county operations and support cross-system decision-making. High among the county's priorities is advancing the coordination of responses to and services for frequent utilizers of the county's health, human services and justice systems, especially chronically homeless individuals. Through the Design Institute, the county deepened its commitment to unlock the power of its data and develop a system that is focused not only on identifying but preventing high utilizers.

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¹U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts: Prince George's County, Md.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/princegeorgescountymaryland/PST045216>
(accessed March 13, 2018).

²U.S. Census Bureau. Urban and Rural Population by State Data, 2010.
<https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/urban-rural-2010.html>
(accessed December 21, 2017).



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ABOUT NACo

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

ABOUT DATA-DRIVEN JUSTICE

The Data-Driven Justice initiative represents a growing network of counties that are reducing incarceration by developing strategies to identify frequent users of jails, hospitals, homeless shelters and other crisis and emergency services and divert them to effective, community-based treatment and care.

To learn more about the initiative and the resources that are available, please visit www.naco.org/datadrivenjustice.