

RCW 10.31.110 Alternatives to arrest—Individuals with mental disorders or substance use disorders.

(1) When a police officer has reasonable cause to believe that the individual has committed acts constituting a crime, and the individual is known by history or consultation with the behavioral health administrative services organization, managed care organization, crisis hotline, local crisis services providers, or community health providers to have a mental disorder or substance use disorder, in addition to existing authority under state law or local policy, as an alternative to arrest, the arresting officer is authorized and encouraged to:

(a) Take the individual to a crisis stabilization unit as defined in RCW 71.05.020. Individuals delivered to a crisis stabilization unit pursuant to this section may be held by the facility for a period of up to twelve hours. The individual must be examined by a mental health professional or substance use disorder professional within three hours of arrival;

(b) Take the individual to a 23-hour crisis relief center as defined in RCW 71.24.025. An individual delivered to a 23-hour crisis relief center may be held up to a period of twelve hours. The individual must be examined by a mental health professional or substance use disorder professional within three hours of arrival;

(c) Refer the individual to a designated crisis responder for evaluation for initial detention and proceeding under chapter 71.05 RCW;

(d) Release the individual upon agreement to voluntary participation in outpatient treatment;

(e) Refer the individual to youth, adult, or geriatric mobile crisis response services, as appropriate; or

(f) Refer the individual to the regional entity responsible to receive referrals in lieu of legal system involvement, including the recovery navigator program[s] described in RCW 71.24.115.

(2) If the individual is released to the community from the facilities in subsection (1)(a) through (c) of this section, the mental health provider or substance use disorder professional shall make reasonable efforts to inform the arresting officer of the planned release prior to release if the arresting officer has specifically requested notification and provided contact information to the provider.

(3) In deciding whether to refer the individual to treatment under this section, the police officer must be guided by local law enforcement diversion guidelines for behavioral health developed and mutually agreed upon with the prosecuting authority with an opportunity for consultation and comment by the defense bar and disability community. These guidelines must address, at a minimum, the length, seriousness, and recency of the known criminal history of the individual, the mental health history of the individual, if available, the substance use disorder history of the individual, if available, the opinions of a mental health professional, if available, the opinions of a substance use disorder professional, if available, and the circumstances surrounding the commission of the alleged offense. The guidelines must include a process for clearing outstanding warrants or referring the individual for assistance in clearing outstanding warrants, if any, and issuing a new court date, if appropriate, without booking or incarcerating the individual or disqualifying the individual from referral to treatment under this section, and define the circumstances under which such action is

permissible. Referrals to services, care, and treatment for substance use disorder must be made in accordance with protocols developed for the recovery navigator program[s] described in RCW 71.24.115.

(4) Any agreement to participate in treatment or services in lieu of jail booking or referring a case for prosecution shall not require individuals to stipulate to any of the alleged facts regarding the criminal activity as a prerequisite to participation in the alternative response described in this section. Any agreement is inadmissible in any criminal or civil proceeding. Such agreements do not create immunity from prosecution for the alleged criminal activity.

(5) If there are required terms of participation in the services or treatment to which an individual was referred under this section, and if the individual violates such terms and is therefore no longer participating in services:

(a) The behavioral health or service provider shall inform the referring law enforcement agency of the violation, if consistent with the terms of the program and applicable law; and

(b) The original charges may be filed or referred to the prosecutor, as appropriate, and the matter may proceed accordingly, unless filing or referring the charges is inconsistent with the terms of a local diversion program or a recovery navigator program[s] described in RCW 71.24.115.

(6) The police officer is immune from liability for any good faith conduct under this section. [2023 c 433 § 17; 2021 c 311 § 6. Prior: 2019 c 326 § 3; 2019 c 325 § 5004; 2014 c 225 § 57; prior: 2011 c 305 § 7; 2011 c 148 § 3; 2007 c 375 § 2.]

Effective date—2021 c 311 §§ 1-11 and 13-21: See note following RCW 71.24.115.

Intent—2019 c 326: See note following RCW 10.77.074.

Effective date—2019 c 325: See note following RCW 71.24.011.

Effective date—2014 c 225: See note following RCW 71.24.016.

Findings—2011 c 305: See note following RCW 74.09.295.

Certification of triage facilities—Effective date—2011 c 148: See notes following RCW 71.05.020.

Findings—Purpose—2007 c 375: "The legislature finds that *RCW 10.77.090 contains laws relating to three discrete subjects. Therefore, one purpose of this act is to reorganize some of those laws by creating new sections in the Revised Code of Washington that clarify and identify these discrete subjects.

The legislature further finds that there are disproportionate numbers of individuals with mental illness in jail. The needs of individuals with mental illness and the public safety needs of society at large are better served when individuals with mental illness are provided an opportunity to obtain treatment and support." [2007 c 375 § 1.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 10.77.090 was repealed by 2007 c 375 § 17. For later enactment, see RCW 10.77.084, 10.77.086, and 10.77.088.

Construction—2007 c 375: "Nothing in this act shall be construed to alter or diminish a prosecutor's inherent authority to divert or pursue the prosecution of criminal offenders." [2007 c 375 § 16.]

Severability—2007 c 375: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2007 c 375 § 18.]