

QUARTER FOUR 2020-2021



Report Prepared By: Lifeways, Inc.



Executive Summary

The Western Idaho Community Crisis Center (WIDCCC) became operational on April 23, 2019. WIDCCC is a partnership between the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW), Southwest District Health (SWDH), and Lifeways Inc. The crisis center serves adults in need of mental health and substance use disorder crisis services in Region III. The center provides stabilization and connection to community resources. Individuals can access the center for a maximum stay of 23 hours and 59 minutes. The center is open 24 hours per day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. The center is located at 524 Cleveland Blvd., Suite 160, Caldwell, ID 83605. WIDCCC is a key part of community integration allowing immediate access and screening to those experiencing a mental health, substance use or resource need. Lifeways adheres to the Minkoff model, which leverages an interdisciplinary team to provide a preliminary medical screening, risk screening and behavioral health assessment to assess for and direct an individual to the most appropriate and cost-efficient level of care.

In the fourth quarter of this year, the crisis center experienced a decrease in access from 1256 admissions in the third quarter to 809 individual admissions. Per previous reporting practices, some admissions represent individuals that were served more than one time. In managing concerns related to substance use or mental health, it is a best and safe practice for an individual to return to avoid or following a relapse or to avoid a higher level of care. The average length of stay was 16 hours and 49 minutes. WIDCCC serves the entirety of Region III, which include: Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette and Washington Counties. The fourth quarter show 87% of the individuals accessing WIDCCC identify Canyon County as their county of residence. To address the more limited WIDCCC utilization from outlying counties, ongoing outreach efforts have continued, specifically targeting the access and transportation barriers that present for a rural district with the geographical spread experienced in Region III. Six percent of the individuals who accessed the crisis center, identified their primary residence as outside of Region III. Although these individuals fell outside of the service area identified for the crisis center, they were provided with access and care, keeping true to the Minkoff Model and “no wrong door” philosophy.

Medicaid/Optum continues to be reported as the leading insurance provider of individuals accessing WIDCCC. Self-referrals are the primary source for individuals seeking services. Of the responses provided by consumers, 46% reported not having or not having access to health insurance. While in crisis, providing accurate information can sometimes be difficult due to interfering symptoms which prevent communication or prevent trust. Presenting as an additional barrier to collecting personal information, including information related to insurance, is the reported concern related to “shame” and “embarrassment” that consumers may associate with the stigma of seeking behavioral health or substance use care.

Admissions

The Western Idaho Community Crisis Center is through the second year of operation. The following admission numbers represent a rolling calendar (Figure 1). WIDCCC processed a total of 809 admissions from 1/1/2021 through 3/31/2021. Of those 809 admissions, 171 were unduplicated visits. It is worth noting that through a majority of 2020 and into 2021, many of the resources that individuals were traditionally referred to as part of a discharge, were not accessible due in part from closures in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Region III does not have a men's shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness. The WIDCCC staff also receives general information calls related to accessing the center for a friend, family member or loved one. In the 4th quarter, the call log reflects 4 calls (not including calls to begin an admission or trouble-shoot access) made, received, and triaged by staff at the crisis center. We should note that during COVID 19 staff were unable to successfully document all calls due to time constraints, much higher census and staff exposures which resulted in running a tighter staffing pattern.

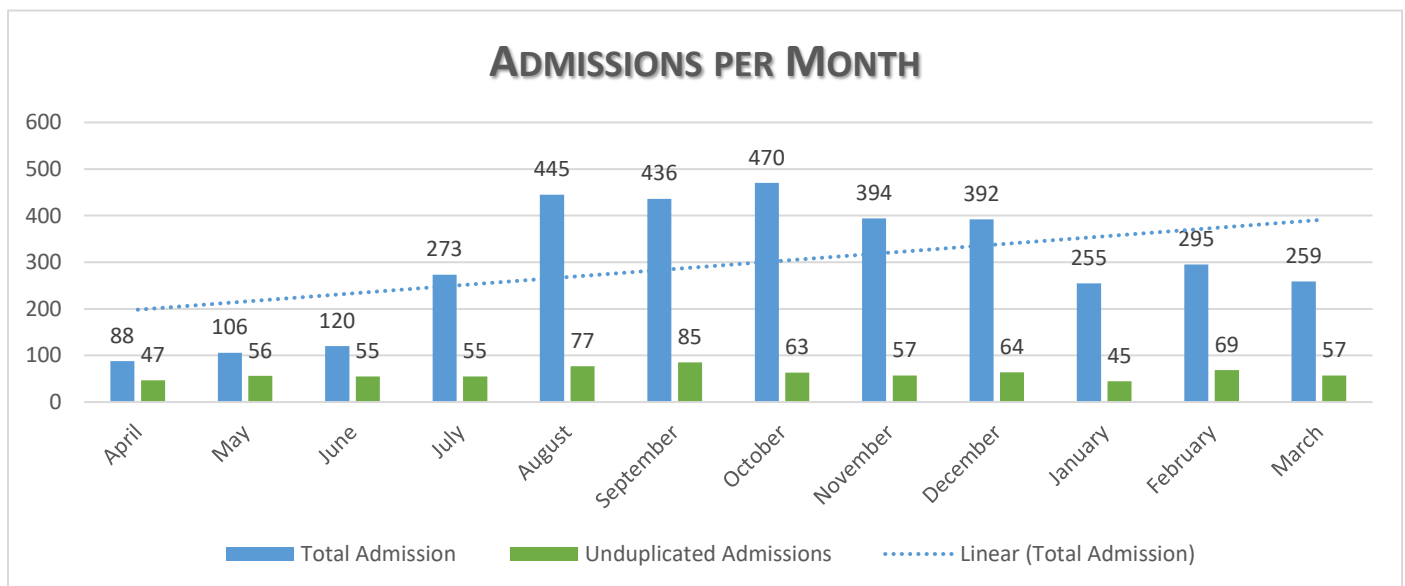


Figure 1: Admissions per Month (April 2020 – March 2021 rolling 12 months)

Demographics

The average length of stay in the fourth quarter was 16 hours and 49 minutes. The average daily census was 9. The number of individuals who were homeless or at risk of being homeless was 560 (69%). The number of identified veterans served was 24 (3%).

Canyon County continues to lead access of WIDCCC with the highest frequency (Figure 2). Lifeways and SWDH have continued active community outreach to the six-county region to not only promote use of this evidence-based and cost saving resource, but also to gather data regarding potential barriers preventing access to the crisis center. Outreach was disrupted in the first quarter due to COVID, with the cancellation of 5 specific speaking engagements targeting groups that serve at-risk and/or vulnerable populations. WIDCCC has also been fortunate to have great partners in community providers as well as in the support of the Region III Behavioral Health Board. This quarter, WIDCCC received funding to provide secure transport to individuals from outlying counties. This funding was secured through the efforts of the Region III Behavioral Health Board and represents the first effort of a BHB to secure funding for a regional crisis center.

Eight hundred and nine individuals sought services at WIDCCC in the fourth quarter, 590 of them identified as male, 190 identified as female, 7 identified as transgendered, and 22 individuals who declined a response (Figure 3).

Three hundred and one (60%) of fourth quarter WIDCCC recipients were between the ages of 45 and 54 years. One hundred forty-nine (30%) recipients were between the ages of 18 and 24 years. (Figure 4). The remainder of recipients were distributed between the age groups: 25 to 34 years, 35 to 44, 55 to 64, and 65+.

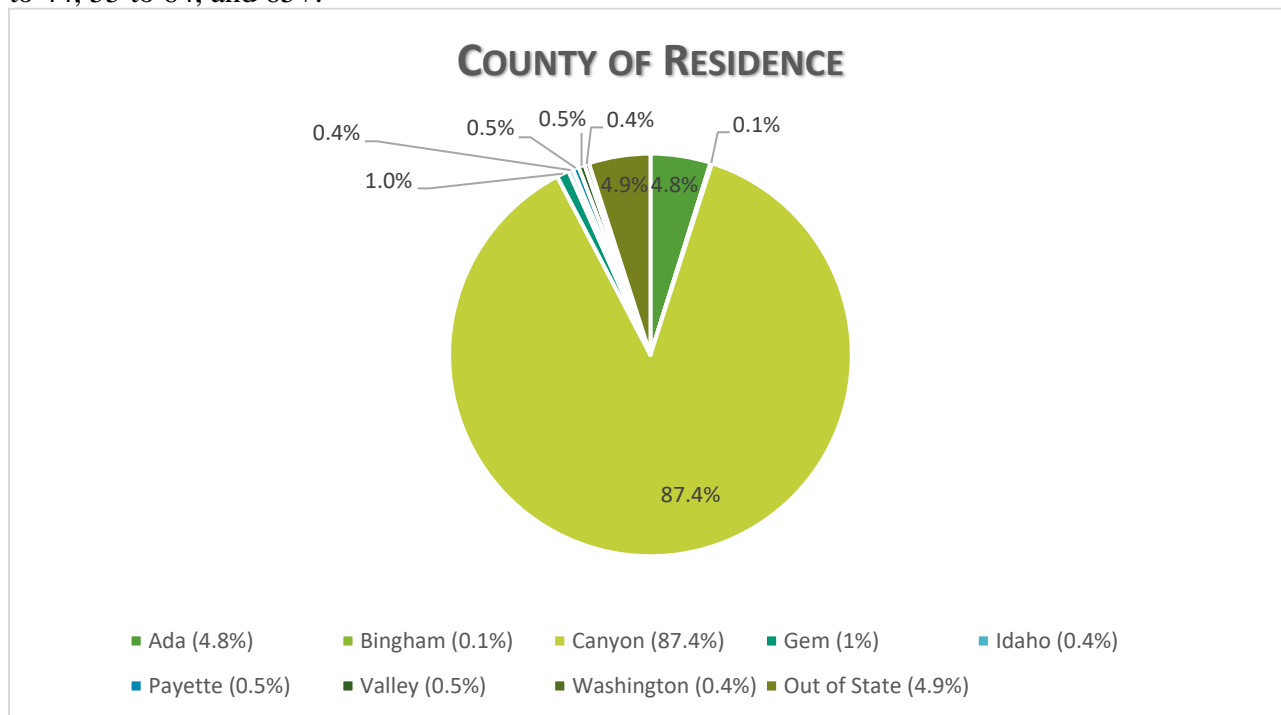


Figure 2: County of Residence for Q4 2020-2021

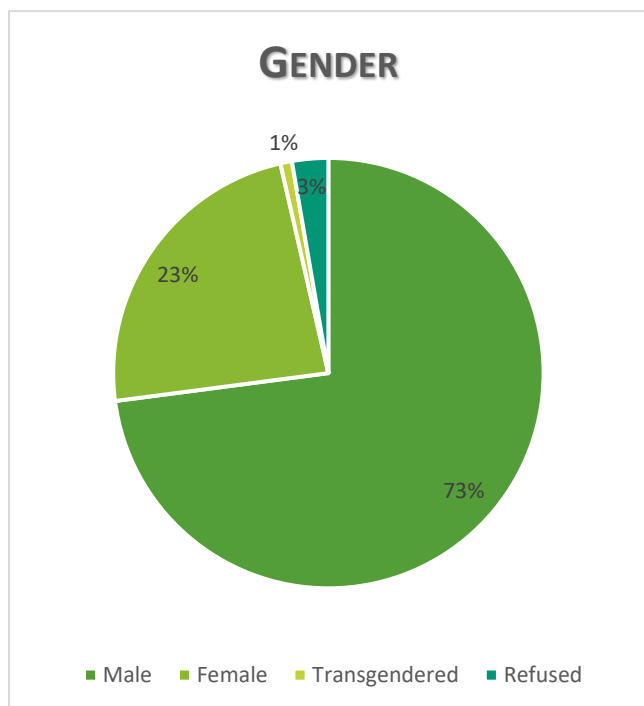


Figure 3: Gender for Q4 2020-2021

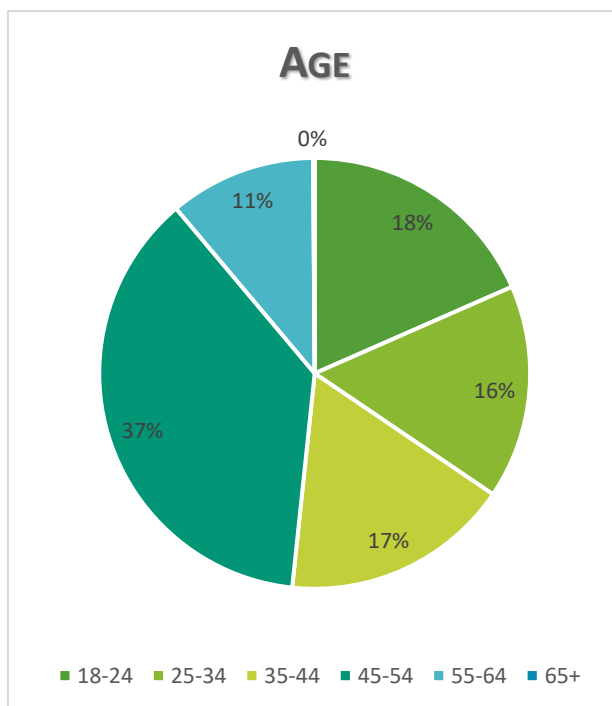


Figure 4: Age for Q4 2020-2021

Diagnoses and Presenting Concerns

Individuals accessing WIDCCC are screened into five categories: mental health only, mental health and substance use, substance use only, inadequate information, or no significant mental health or substance use diagnosis (Figure 5). WIDCCC was initially designed as a center to address crisis related to behavioral health and/or substance use concerns, “crisis” has since defined in a much broader context. Individuals requiring services to address a mental health or substance use concern may identify their presenting concern as a housing, employment, or other need (Figure 6). A presenting concern for an individual is often the circumstance that brought them to *seek* care, not necessarily the circumstance that the care is meant to *resolve*. Allowing an individual to define their crisis, meeting a person where they are at, has value and has demonstrated cost savings for the community in the long run. This approach also contributes to reducing stigma associated with accessing the center, as well as the level of acuity and cost to the community and system that an individual is often required to meet before being able to access a higher level of care.

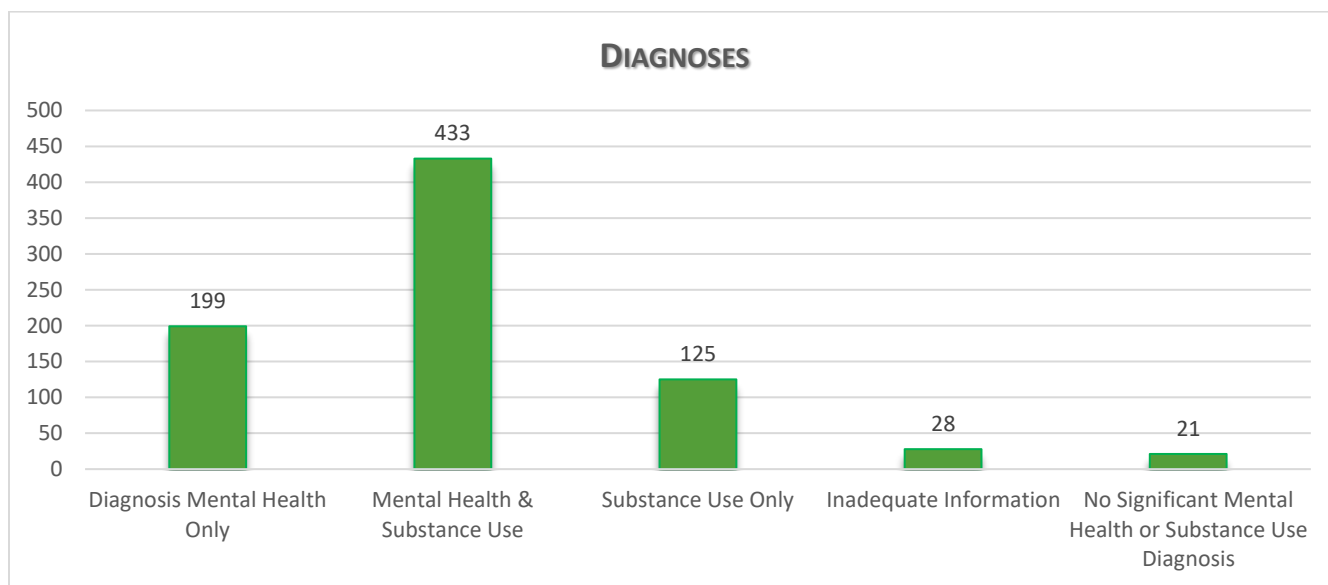


Figure 5: Diagnoses for Q4 2020-2021

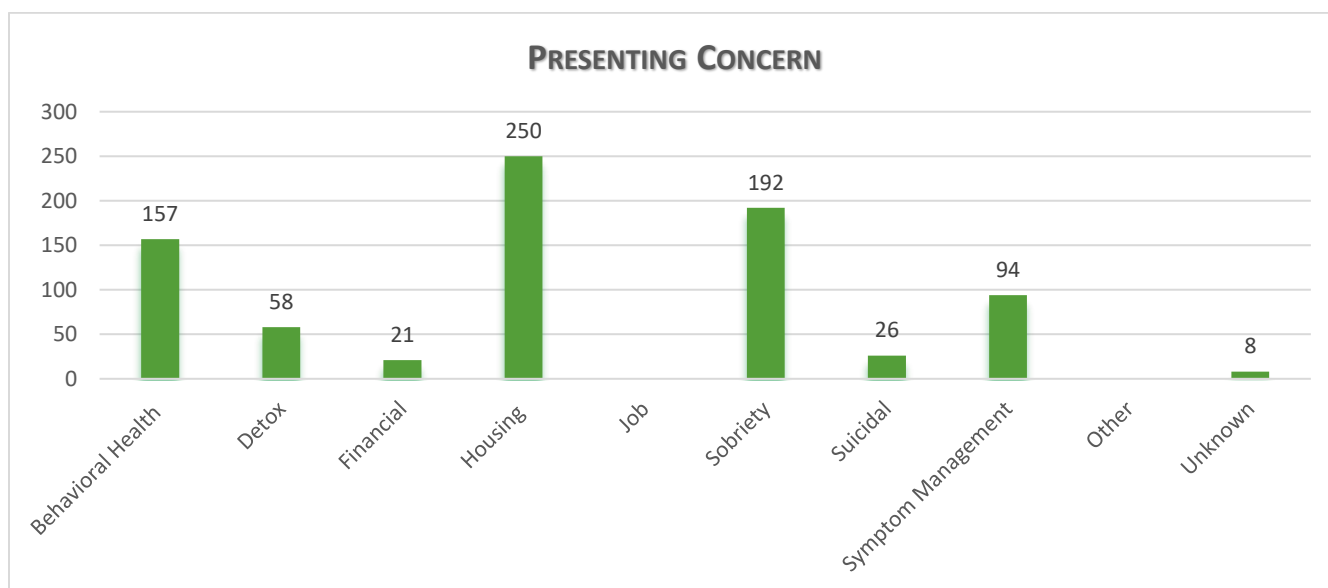


Figure 6: Presenting Concern for Q4 2020-2021

Referral Sources to the WIDCCC

Referral sources (Table 1) indicate how an individual learned about or was referred to the WIDCCC. The data are self-reported by the individual seeking services. Individuals may identify more than one referral source.

Referral Source			
Community Mental Health Agency	29	Physician	21
District Health Service	2	Police (except court or correction agency)	70
Family/Friend	84	Probation/Parole	29
Hospital	98	Self Help Group	34
Jail	7	Self/Guardian	324
Legal Counsel	1	Shelter for Homeless	5
Other Community Organizations	2	SUD Provider	5
Other Health & Welfare Programs	2	Unknown	96

Table 1: Referral Source Q4 2020-2021

Insurance Information

While the last year has brought WIDCCC an overall increase in utilization, two barriers continued to be experienced by patrons or potential patrons. One of the barriers to access is the fear of financial hardship, although outreach continues to promote WIDCCC as a cost-free intervention.

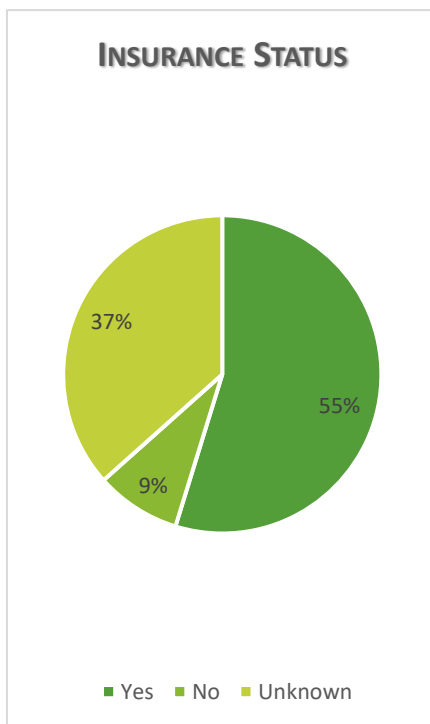


Figure 8: Insurance Status

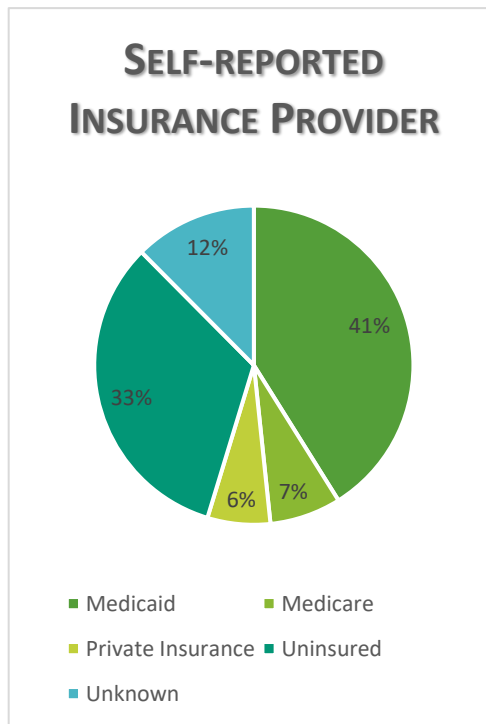


Figure 7: Self-Reported Insurance

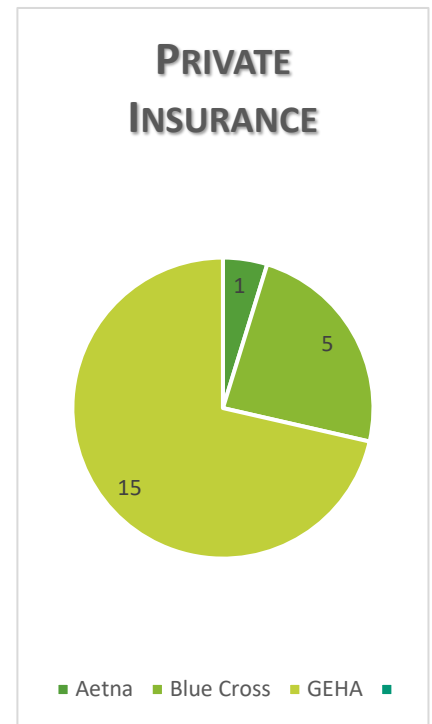


Figure 9: Private Insurance

Cost Savings Report

In September 2019, a crisis center workgroup which had been established in March 2018 was demobilized, and the WIDCCC Advisory Committee was established in accordance with Idaho statute. An immediate focus of the committee is to research methods to gather the number of emergency medical response man hours related to behavioral health and the number of emergency department visits for behavioral health concerns that do not result in hospital admittance, as those data points are not currently available.

Presently, local law enforcement agencies report that there are no data specific to the number of hours spent with persons with behavioral health conditions. In the fourth quarter there were 70 law enforcement drop offs to the crisis center, resulting in an estimated savings of \$70,000. According to an estimate developed by Pathways Community Crisis Center of Southwest Idaho, it costs law enforcement an estimated \$1000 per response to behavioral health related calls. To develop this estimate, Pathways took into account the number of law enforcement officers who report to a call, dispatch, operational and administrative costs. Nampa Police Department is exploring a method to code behavioral health related calls. This would make it easier to pull calls for service and report law enforcement hours spent with persons with behavioral health conditions; however, that is only one agency in Region III.

In the fourth quarter, seven individuals were diverted to the crisis center, in place of jail. This provided an estimated cost savings in the fourth quarter of \$8,610 (Table 2). For fiscal year 2020, the Idaho Department of Corrections calculates the cost per inmate per day to be \$72.97. The average length of stay in Canyon County Jail is 15 days, with a daily cost of \$82, as reported by Canyon County Sherriff’s Office. It cost \$312 per day to house inmates outside of the county.

Based on the State Behavioral Health Planning Council State of Mind, the average cost for each behavioral health encounter in a local emergency department is \$2,600. This rate is based on a 24-hour length of stay. In fiscal year 2018, the average length of stay was 5.72 days and in fiscal year 2019, which increased to 5.91 days and an estimated cost of \$15,340 per visit.

In the fourth quarter, 98 individuals were diverted to the crisis center, in place of local emergency departments. This provided an estimated cost savings in the fourth quarter of \$254,800 (Table 2).

Diversions	Visits	Cost/Visit	Total Cost
From Hospital	98	\$2,600	\$254,800
From Jail	7	\$82/day x 15 days	\$8,610
Law Enforcement	70	\$1,000	\$70,000
Total:			\$333,410

Table 2: Estimated Cost Savings

Source: Information is pulled from number of drop-offs by law enforcement and self-reported Individual surveys.

Sustainability

In the initial planning phases of the crisis center, Southwest District Health (SWDH) and Lifeways began to plan for sustainability. Leaders from both organizations worked to bring together health insurance companies, counties, cities, local hospitals, and potential donors to discuss the importance and need of a crisis center in the community and its potential for cost savings. A workgroup was established to work on, not only opening the crisis center, but also a sustainability plan. That workgroup then demobilized and the WIDCCC Advisory Committee was established. A subcommittee now meets monthly to work toward establishing sustainability.

In August of 2019, crisis centers across Idaho received a letter from IDHW notifying of a substantial budgetary cut effective January 1, 2020, and a second on July 1, 2020. This cut appeared to include WIDCCC, in its first quarter of operation. While WIDCCC has committed to maximizing reimbursement, IDHW committed to ensuring financial support, up to the original funding outlined in the contract, in the event Medicaid billing does not make up for the reduction in contract funds.

Lifeways and SWDH continued outreach and education efforts, met with various insurance companies/payers to share research, offer tours, link with comparable programs in other states to establish an agreed upon standard of care and rate. Lifeways was able to secure a contract and day-rate from Optum Idaho. In December of 2019, WIDCCC passed the Optum Crisis Center Credentialing Audit with a score of 100% and the Treatment Record Review with a score of 100%.

The crisis center has since gathered additional paneling with insurances and secured funding to cover the cost of services rendered from counties within Region III.

In order for the Crisis Center to reach 50% of funding through reimbursement, a daily census average of 9 was the goal. Over the last 9 months, census averages and reimbursement received have successfully brought us to that goal.

Gaps, Needs and Opportunities

The WIDCCC Advisory Committee has identified messaging, outreach, stigma and transportation as barriers to accessing care. With the emergence of COVID, the Advisory Committee has assisted and weighed in on opportunities to secure additional materials (PPE and infection control materials) and/or funding required to maintain the safety and health of all accessing the center.

Additional subcommittees may be established to focus efforts on addressing these barriers to receiving care at the WIDCCC.

New Developments

WIDCCC emerged as a front runner in quality and ingenuity, credentialing with three insurances: Optum Idaho, Blue Cross of Idaho and IPN. WIDCCC successfully passed the first Optum Idaho audit with a 100% and set the bar for rolling out telehealth services prior to the COVID pandemic.

In the fourth quarter, WIDCCC submitted successful billings to third party payers.

WIDCCC and Lifeways have continued to work toward problems solving the barrier of geography when it comes to improving access for outlying counties. Lifeways has accessed grant funding to provide taxi and bus vouchers to provide transportation for individuals accessing the center from outlying counties.

In the last quarter, Lifeways explored an opportunity with Uber Health to continue to work on improving ease of access to the crisis center, as well as provide an additional opportunity for community members to contribute to breaking down stigma associated with substance use, mental health and experiencing a crisis. The cost of this endeavor was unrealistic to provide ongoing, cost effective access for outlying counties.

The past year, experiencing the COVID19 Pandemic, has required many modifications to the protocols of the WIDCCC facility as well as the facilities that individuals in crisis access. WIDCCC was part of a work group that came together to problem solve easing access that local emergency rooms may experience due to the influx that was anticipated. During, the “stay at home order” individuals that had historically accessed homeless shelters found that the shelters were either restricted or unable to accept them for one reason or another. Reduced access to community resources and increased community stressors fleeing domestic violence to seek out the crisis center for assistance in accessing short term crisis management. WIDCCC was able to triage, adapt and safely meet these needs to allow for local medical resources to be maintained for just that.

The fourth quarter has required that ongoing safety measures remain in place, as well as additional staff to mitigate the increased utilization and potential for call outs due to exposures.

Referrals

Crisis center staff connect individuals who have accessed the crisis center to community resources as part of the aftercare plan. In the fourth quarter, the number of referrals to community resources was 1,327 (Table 3). This does not include referrals back to an established treatment provider that the individual may present with. Every individual accessing the crisis center is offered and encouraged to allow staff to assist in scheduling a follow-up appointment with a community provider in his or her community. For individuals that present without an established provider, staff attempt to offer at least three providers that are a “best fit” financially and geographically for the individual. For individuals who identify that they do not have insurance, staff are trained to assist linking/referring individuals with Medicaid enrollment as part of their case management. The number of referrals to a higher level of care was 17. As an additional development, WIDCCC staff have partnered with the Community Crisis Response Team through Health and Welfare to offer a check in/follow up service to individuals who are interested or would value this.

Community Resource Referrals	
Food Banks	151
Hospital	17
Housing	250
Legal Resources	5
Primary Care	23
Refused	56
Religious	1
SUD/MH	349
Suicide Hotlines	749
Support Agency	2
Vocation	2

Table 3: Community resource referrals Q4 2020-2021

Referrals to a Higher Level of Care	
WVMC	15
St. Alphonsus	0
Lifeways Hospital	2

Table 4: Referrals to a higher level of care Q4 2020-2021

Outcomes and Experience

29 follow-up calls were possible with permission and/or accuracy of information provided to staff. Of the individuals who answered, 26% stated they had a higher quality of life.

Number of follow-up calls completed and the results of those calls		
Result	Number	Percentage
Unable to contact	6	21%
Answered	23	79%
Of those who answered:		
Admitted to ED	0	0%
Arrested/Incarcerated	0	0%
*Higher Quality of Life	6	26%
Individual Followed through with care plan	18	78%

Table 5: Number of follow-up calls and results Q4 2020-2021

In the fourth quarter, 6 Individual Experience Surveys were completed; the average score from these surveys was 3.60 out of 4.

INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE SURVEY SCORES	
ADMISSION	Average Score
1. Admission process was speedy.....	3.00
2. Staff was courteous during admission.....	3.83
FACILITY	Average Score
1. The facility is comfortable.....	4.00
2. Noise level of the facility was satisfactory.....	3.00
3. Overall cleanliness of the facility was satisfactory.....	4.00
4. Overall condition of the facility was satisfactory.....	3.67
STAFF CARE	Average Score
1. Staff treated with courtesy and respect.....	3.50
2. Staff introduced you to the facility and program.....	3.83
3. Staff were prompt in responding to your requests.....	3.83
4. Staff kept you informed about your treatment program.....	4.00
5. Staff were helpful.....	3.67
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TREATMENT TEAM	Average Score
1. Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Coaches were courteous and helpful.....	2.83
2. Case Managers were courteous and helpful.....	2.83
3. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) were courteous and helpful.....	4.00
SOME PERSONAL ISSUES	Average Score
1. Staff had concern for your privacy.....	3.33
2. Staff were sensitive to your language, cultural, and spiritual needs.....	3.33
3. Staff responded to concerns/complaints made during your treatment.....	3.83

DISCHARGE	Average Score
1. Information about your plan after discharge was explained in a way you understand..	4.00
2. You were provided clear instructions on what to do if you need help after discharge (when to seek help, whom to call, etc.).....	3.83
3. Your plan included referrals to resources and providers to continue treatment.....	3.67

Individual Comments

Some of the comments provided on the Individual Experience Surveys include:

“Great job Homies.”

Some of the comments provided in community forums/social media/via referral partner feedback:

“There was literally no where to go. No shelter, no family, nothing. I had nothing. This happened to me and I needed help and I had nothing. Someone at a meeting told me to go there and I did. The guy who met me in the lobby just listened, let me take a shower and sleep. He didn’t tell me everything was going to be alright-a lot of the places you go tell you that everything is going to be alright like it will just happen. He told me that what I told him sounded like a hard place to be but that everyone there would work with me to see if there was anything that could make it better. The next morning, that guy was gone and there was two ladies that listened and just started making calls with me. I got fresh clothes and a good meal. I got some appointments scheduled with a counselor next to a place I could stay. They said I could come back whenever I needed to. I’ve been to a therapist four times now, I’m still in the shelter, but I’ve got a job. Everything is not alright, but I’m going to keep on doing what I can do to make it there.”