

■ OPINIONS

Crisis Response: A safety net for Central Arizona

By Suzanne Rabideau
CEO for the Crisis Response Network Inc.

With all the publicity around recent tragedies, you might find yourself asking, "What types of services are available for people in a mental health crisis?"

With one in four adults nationwide and in Arizona — and one in five children — affected by mental illness, there is a probability that on any given day you could encounter someone in a mental health crisis.

People experience behavioral health crises every day, and many people don't know about the elaborate safety net we have here in central Arizona for crisis intervention. In addition to programs for early identification of behavioral health symptoms and resources available for early intervention, the Arizona Department of Health Services, Magellan Health Services, the Crisis Response Network, and other community providers have worked together to create our Crisis System of Care, which integrates a vast array of services.

Our system has a continuum of crisis services including a parent assistance line, a peer-operated warm line, a 24/7

■ GUEST COMMENTARY

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crisis hotline, response teams who help individuals in emergency rooms, Crisis Transition Navigators, Mobile Crisis Teams (who meet with individuals and families in the community or in their home), crisis stabilization units and detoxification centers in Central Phoenix and the East Valley.

In Avondale, at 824 N. 99th Ave., Community Bridges, a behavioral health provider, operates a 24/7 walk-in outpatient facility for people in the West Valley who need

brief stabilization. It also operates one in the East Valley in Mesa.

The Crisis System works closely with local police and fire departments, social service agencies, the Department of Corrections, parole/probation, homeless shelters, Child Protective Services and community members. These community-driven partnerships result in first responders spending less time on psychiatric calls either by a mobile team meeting the first responders in the community or through use of a process developed for them to bring an individual to a Crisis Center, with an average drop off time of five minutes, compared to what used to be hours of waiting in hospital ERs.

The crisis system in Maricopa County is seen nationally as a state-of-the-art safety net for our community. Together we are saving people's lives, keeping families intact, saving money and preserving valuable safety resources. The Crisis Response Network receives 19,000 calls a month, and 92 percent of the

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Letters

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Medical pot has many benefits

Editor:

You know that I just can't believe that so many people are against medical marijuana. Even if it's been proven to help a lot of sick people. Of course some abuse it and don't use it

for themselves only, "but" yet on all the TV stations I see ads advertising all the energy drinks, especially the five hour energy drink for secretaries, nurses, teachers and anyone that needs a boost. That's like taking speed, so the teenagers know they can buy them at any store there is, with no questions asked. Adults using the energy drinks to handle day after day. What a shame. I've known a lot of deaths among teenagers with energy drinks and so-called spice. Ban those, take them off the shelves. Now people in office want to ban soft drinks

because of sugar. OMG, ban the bad stuff and company's should reduce sugar in soft drinks. And also I've never heard of anyone overdosing on marijuana ever. So I call this a double standard on behalf of the adults that need to practice what they preach. Ban all energy drinks and spice don't sell them, but then taxes would be lost, it's all on making money.

It's so sad! Think smart. We back in the day didn't need boosters to work.

Maria Botello
Avondale

Letters welcome

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A message from the ARIZONA NEWSPAPERS ASSOCIATION. Learn more at publicnoticeaz.com.