**Overview**

Police accountability involves holding both individual police officers and law enforcement agencies responsible for maintaining order and delivering basic services of crime control. Police accountability is important for maintaining the public’s faith in the system and it must be done while treating individuals fairly, respectfully and within the bounds of law.

In the fall of 2014, Minneapolis Police Chief Janee Harteau requested the Diagnostic Center’s services to assist with improving police accountability and providing advice on Early Intervention Systems (EIS). Appointed Chief in 2012, Harteau’s focus has been on improving professionalism, transparency and accountability in her department.

Also in October 2012, the City of Minneapolis made changes to the citizen complaint process, creating the Office of Police Conduct Review (OPCR) to replace the Civilian Review Authority (CRA). Comprised of civilian personnel from the Minneapolis Civil Rights Department, sworn officers and staff from MPD’s Internal Affairs Unit, the OPCR is responsible for receiving and processing complaints of police misconduct.

The Diagnostic Center analyzed citizen complaints against Minneapolis officers from 2008 through 2013 to identify patterns and trends in officer performance and discipline, interviewed 45 local stakeholders and community members to identify strengths and gaps in the police conduct and oversight process and conducted a review of the existing EIS in MPD compared to EIS model practices.

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<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>33</td>
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- Serious disciplinary actions against officers such as terminations and suspensions occur infrequently (approximately 7-20 cases annually)
- Proactive interventions, like coaching, have been a consistent part of MPD’s response to complaints against officers

**The Office of Police Conduct Review’s Initial Complaint Disposition** *(October 2012 to December 2013)*

- OPCR complaint processing data show that approximately 47% of complaints are dismissed; 28% are sent to coaching; 4% are sent to mediation; and 21% proceed to an investigation
- The data indicated that 53% of the initial complaints received additional action beyond intake investigation
The Diagnostic Center

The Diagnostic Center is a technical assistance resource provider designed to build community capacity to use data to make short- and long-term evidence-based decisions about criminal justice and public safety. Diagnostic Center engagements enhance the ability of public safety executives to collect and use local data to understand the jurisdiction’s issues, make decisions about programs and practices and support efforts to integrate data and evidence into policies. The Diagnostic Center invests in what works by bridging the gap between data and criminal justice policy at the state, local and tribal levels.

The Diagnostic Process

The Diagnostic Center began its three-step process to help MPD with improving police accountability and their EIS.

During the Diagnose phase, the Diagnostic Center team conducted interviews and collected and analyzed data. This Diagnostic Center identified five factors contributing to MPD’s challenges and recommended several evidence-based models and promising practices to address the issues.

Five Factors Contributing to the Issue

1. **Lack of effective internal and external communication** - The community was not well informed about the new complaint process and information on how complaints are filed and their outcomes was limited, leading to confusion and contributing to a lack of trust in the community. In addition, MPD lacked an effective communications strategy for proactive community outreach.

2. **Trust in police lacking** - Community members identified the need for MPD to improve their relationship with communities of color, increase community engagement practices and expand cultural competency training for officers.

3. **Limited understanding of complaint process and its outcomes** - Stakeholders, community members and even police officers reported not understanding the new OPCR process. Examples cited included confusion over whether OPCR-investigated complaints result in officer discipline, which complaints OPCR addresses versus Internal Affairs and why OPCR assigns some complaints to sworn versus civilian investigators.

4. **Lack of an operational EIS** - MPD’s EIS was reactive rather than prevention oriented. It lacked adequate stakeholder buy-in and input, an updated automated information system that easily allows for tracking and flagging behaviors of concern and interventions for problematic behavior.

5. **Coaching process in need of enhancements** - MPD’s coaching process lacked definition, training for front line supervisors to enhance coaching skills and consistency in practice and a variety of options for employee support.
Description and Details of Recommended Evidence-based Programs and Practices

Early Intervention System (EIS)

An EIS is a data management tool that tracks a range of officer behaviors such as citizen complaints, use of sick leave and uses of force. The system identifies officers who exceed identified thresholds established by the department (e.g., three uses of force) and flags these critical behavioral indicators. Officers flagged by the system are evaluated through the supervisory chain and a course of action—such as mentoring, counseling or retraining—is recommended to intervene and change problematic behavior.

The goals of EIS include risk management and prevention of misconduct, in contrast to discipline. These systems are considered best practice for achieving police accountability. An EIS offers a process for assisting officers in overcoming personal or professional problems that affect job performance, early identification of potential personnel problems, improved supervision of frontline officers and data-driven information for management decisions.

Community-Police Collaborative Partnership

Collaborations are a complex form of community-police interaction. While all police agencies interact with the community, some focus on less complex forms such as information sharing (outreach), stakeholder input (consultation) and resource sharing (coordination). Collaborative partnerships bring together police and a broad range of community stakeholders to address persistent public safety problems by sharing responsibilities, resources and decision-making. Collaborative partnerships use prevention and problem-solving strategies to address root causes of crime and help police build community trust. The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing (May 2015) recommended law enforcement agencies collaborate with community members to reduce crime by improving relationships, expanding community engagement and gaining community cooperation.

Citizen Review and Oversight

There are various forms of citizen review of police misconduct, and not all models will work in every agency or jurisdiction. Research indicates there are four key principles that form the foundation of an effective citizen complaint process: (1) Comprehensiveness; (2) Accessibility; (3) Fairness; and (4) Transparency (Source: Building Trust Between the Police and the Citizens They Serve, 2009). Using these principles, a police department can clarify specific aspects of the complaint process; provide information to citizens on how to file complaints; ensure complaint outcomes are disseminated widely in the community; and use complaint data to determine whether patterns of problem behavior emerge.

Diagnostic Center’s Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy
- Expand community engagement practices and integrate model practices
- Adopt model practices in police conduct and oversight
- Develop a new, prevention-oriented EIS
- Strengthen coaching and integrate it with the new EIS

Community’s Response

In January 2015, MPD committed to implementing all of the Diagnostic Center’s recommendations. Working together, they created an implementation process that included a steering committee and five working committees – one for each of the recommended areas. The working committees are comprised of command staff, patrol officers, city government officials and community members. The Diagnostic Center provided subject matter experts to assist with the EIS, coaching and communications committees. The five implementation committees developed a framework for change and pathways for increasing officer accountability.
In addition, the Diagnostic Center organized peer exchanges for teams of MPD officers and community representatives to visit other departments around the country. One peer exchange with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) allowed MPD officers to learn from LVMPD's successful community-police collaboration, which has been in place for more than a decade. The team also saw how LVMPD is integrating community policing into all areas of their department. A second peer exchange centered on the SPD's new EIS. Three MPD officers and two community members traveled to Seattle to learn from the department's recent efforts to develop a new system and integrate performance mentoring into the EIS.

The steering committee recommended that the MPD create a community engagement board consisting of members from the public and the police and chaired by a community member to oversee community engagement. Chief Harteau responded to this recommendation and created a new division—Community & Collaborative Advancement (CCA)—and promoted a well-respected officer to Commander to oversee the division. With the creation of this division, the MPD institutionalizes the initiatives recommended by each committee to improve procedural justice, public trust and collaborative partnerships.

**Impact and Outcome**

Enhancing transparency and accountability by: disseminating information to community residents about the complaint process including filings, and complaint outcomes using video postings, handouts, and social media; provide special training to supervisors who participated in MPD discipline panels; and a mandated annual review and public report on the complaint review and discipline process.

Re-establishing an Early Intervention System including: establishing an EIS coordinator position; a officer working group providing input for EIS criteria and thresholds; setting up a citizen/police oversight committee for EIS functions; and putting in place a software system that automatically alerts the EIS coordinator when officers reach intervention requirement thresholds.

Expanding community outreach and improved external and internal communications such as: using a range of social media tools to communicate directly with residents; hiring a video journalist to facilitate video story telling about department and community activities; providing additional information to officers on critical incident communications and updating critical incident communication protocols.

Improving community policing by: requiring officers in each shift to “talk and walk” with residents; hosting a series of listening sessions with community members and police officers; and creating community awards for officers.

**Insight Gained**

Police accountability is key to gaining community trust. If rigorous oversight is lacking or citizens perceive officers are not disciplined for misconduct or inappropriate behavior, the police-community relationship will be negatively impacted.

If designed and resourced properly, an EIS can be an effective accountability tool for improving officer performance and preventing misconduct.

By involving community members in the oversight process, educating the community and officers on the complaint process and disseminating information on officer discipline regularly, police agencies demonstrate their commitment to transparency and trust building with the communities they serve.

"(The Diagnostic Center) gave us a clear direction on where we wanted to go...the most valuable part of the entire process was the inclusion of our community stakeholders working hand in hand with members of the MPD."

– Chief Janeé Harteau

*Minneapolis Police Department*