



Editor's Note

In this issue we look at crime rates in relation to criminal justice reform and police staffing. In Alaska, crime rates, particularly property crime, have been increasing. Trend lines tell us that this increase has been occurring for the last few years. While we are not at an all-time high, we are continuing to move up. Both stories caution using crime rates as a single factor to determine policy. Another story in this issue, on Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), shows how specific training

provides law enforcement with knowledge and skills for improving police interactions with individuals with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder. The newly formed Mat-Su CIT Coalition is using this training and collaborative approach between health and mental health providers, first responders, and the justice system to aid in responding to a growth in 911 calls involving mental health and substance use.

For purposes of disclosure, I am a board member of the Anchorage affiliate of NAMI (the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill). NAMI and many local affiliates collaborate with CITs. NAMI Anchorage, however, is not a partner in the Mat-Su CIT Coalition.

I encourage you to go to the *Forum* online — www.uaa.alaska.edu/justice/forum/ — and read about specialized police responses in addition to CIT. Online you'll also find full citations to references in *Forum* articles and a place to sign up to get the *Forum* electronically.

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