I3: Competitive Analysis

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Competing Service:

I am doing my competitive analysis on the Low Acuity Alarm Taskforce. It began in July 2016 in Seattle and was founded to "improve unit availability" and "provides enhanced service to individuals calling with lower acuity complaints" [1]. It lists four major activities that have been implemented:

1. *"Outreach and engagement with high-utilizing individuals."* [1]
   a. Meets goals- I think that this activity meets the goal of freeing up the time firefighters spend on non-emergent calls. Our user group expressed frustration that they were trained for emergencies and high adrenaline situations, but in reality they spend most of their time responding to non-emergencies.
   b. Fails to meet goals- The taskforce only has two employees, and to reach every "high-utilizing" individual would take a much bigger workforce. I think this activity is good in theory, but isn't practical for the amount of low acuity runs Seattle receives.
2. *"Education, training, and resources for high-utilizing locations."* [1]
   a. Meets goals- I think this responds well to our user's motivation of community safety. If high-utilizing individuals are trained, they are able to help themselves immediately, without having to wait for the firefighters to show up and without having to have their vitals and patient information taken.
   b. Fails to meet goals- From our user research, we gathered that most high-utilizing individuals are the elderly and the homeless. The elderly cannot pick themselves up after a fall, but rather that is the caregivers job. I would recommend directly the education and training to caregivers, who are often present or called when a non-emergent accident happens. Additionally, I am skeptical that presentations at homeless shelters about non-emergency responses would reach a large audience, and would suggest some other method.
3. *"In-depth data analysis including low acuity trends, city-wide patterns, and location breakdowns."* [1]
   a. Meets goals- Our users touched on the importance of busy stations during the beginning of their career, and this resource would allow new firefighters to find the busiest stations with the most emergent runs. Conversely, this would allow more experienced and older firefighters to choose a station that would be less physically demanding.

b. Fails to meet goals- One of our user groups biggest pain points was the report at the end of a call. They didn't like it because the report asked for very detailed (they felt too detailed) information about a call, and didn't let them input their own answer. Instead, they had to choose from a drop down menu of pre-made choices that they felt were irrelevant and annoying. Collecting a large amount of low acuity data means pre set menus and excruciating detail are necessary to compile data across all districts, and I think this only exacerbates the pain point.

4. *"Establishing working relationships with similar programs from neighboring fire departments, healthcare services, Seattle and King County government agencies, nonprofits, and others."* [1]

   a. Meets goals- A common pain point is departmental communication, and I think if departments had similar programs it would decrease the frustration that comes with interdepartmental communication.

   b. Fails to meet goals- I think that different areas have different low acuity needs, so I question a one size fits all response.

Reviews of Competing Service:

It is very difficult to find outside reviews of this task force, as the general public isn't aware of low acuity issues, or cares enough to critique the Low Acuity Alarm programs they've implemented. That said, I found a Seattle Advisory Council Meeting from 6/8/2018 that discusses the task force success. Since the program launch, there is upwards of 73 enrolled clients, meaning the taskforce has at least helped 73 high-utilizing individuals get the resources they need. Of those enrolled, 51% are male, 68% white, 21% African-American, and 9% Native American. I don't know the ethnic breakdown of high-utilizing individuals, but I would hope that these percentages are reflective of the whole, and one ethnicity doesn't seem to be enrolling more than others (or, conversely, one ethnicity isn't reached out to as often). I also found this graph, which shows the amount of vulnerable adult calls per each station [2]. Review continued on next page.

VULNERABLE ADULT THROUGHOUT SEATTLE

SFD VULNERABLE ADULT REPORTS BY STATION, 2018
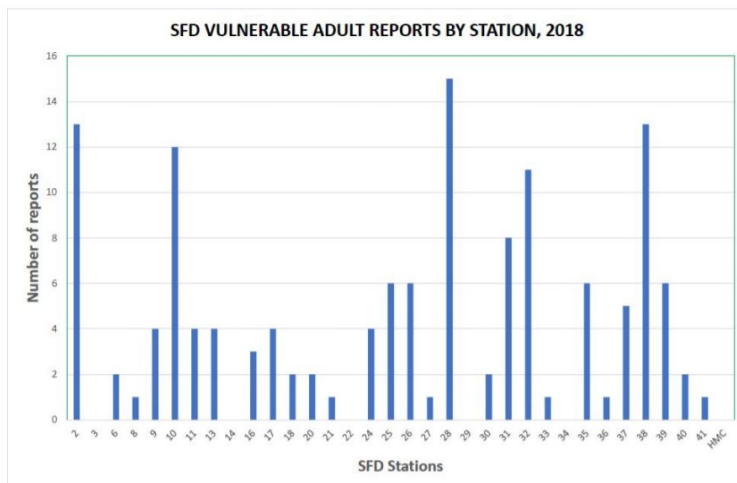
- 357 referrals in 2017
- 60% not receiving formal assistance at time of report
- 50% of these subsequently received assistance – in-home care, meals on wheels, move to higher level of care, etc.
- 184 firefighters reported in 2017 – nearly 1 in 5

It states that 50% of those that received assistance from firefighters began a more permanent source of care for themselves after the 911 response [2]. It seems that an incident spurs on the realization that more help is needed. Drawing conclusions from the graph and statistics, I feel like the program could be improved if we could reach vulnerable adults before that first call by providing resources for them that help them find the right time in their condition to get extra care. Additionally, although they provide no data, Seattle Fire Department says that this program has "demonstrated year-over-year call reductions" [1]. Overall, I think Seattle Fire Department thinks this program is successful, but just wishes to keep pushing it further.I wish there were more reviews out there on the success of this program, but I was not able to find them.

Resources:
- [1] Seattle Fire Department. "Low Acuity." *Seattle.gov*, www.seattle.gov/fire/safety-and-community/low-acuity#howareotherjurisdictionsaddressingtheproblem.
- [2] ADS Advisory Council. "SFD COLLABORATION WITH ADS: VULNERABLE ADULT AND LOW ACUITY." *Seattle Fire Department*, 8 June 2018, www.agingkingcounty.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/185/2018/09/ACpresentation06082018SFDcollaborationVulnerableAdultLowAcuity.pdf .