



Board of Supervisors Memorandum

November 10, 2015

**Resolution No. 2015-_____ in Support of
the National Association of Counties Stepping Up Initiative**

Introduction

The National Association of Counties (NACO), in cooperation with the Council of State Governments and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, has launched a national effort to reduce the number of individuals with mental and co-occurring substance use disorders in jail. The project is receiving financial support from the United States Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The effort, called "Stepping Up: A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails," recognizes that there already are many innovations being implemented across the country and hopes to build on those practices.

As part of the initiative, NACO announced a Call to Action, asking county elected officials to pass a resolution in support of Stepping Up and work with other leaders (e.g., sheriffs, judges, district attorneys, treatment providers, and state and local policymakers), people with mental illnesses and their advocates, and other stakeholders to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

The counties that participate will be asked to collect data on the prevalence of mental illness among inmates, examine treatment and service capacity, and develop a plan to reduce incarceration of this population. Participant counties will receive an online resources toolkit to assist with efforts, including a series of webinars, exercises and related distance-learning opportunities; peer-to-peer exchanges; and key resources from initiative partners. There will be a national summit in the spring of 2016 and possibly future funding opportunities.

Pima County has already done much of the baseline work, such as creating the law enforcement Mental Health Support Teams, the Crisis Response Center, and a Forensic Task Force. In addition, this initiative clearly complements the planning work already underway and funded by the MacArthur grant. The substantial population of individuals in the Pima County jail with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues is likely to be one of the priority areas targeted for programs and alternatives to incarceration as part of our application for MacArthur implementation funds.

Sheriff Chris Nanos and Corrections Chief India Davis support Pima County's participation in this initiative.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Re: Resolution No. 2015-_____ in Support of the National Association of Counties
Stepping Up Initiative

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Attached is an overview of the Stepping Up initiative and Resolution No. 2015-_____ for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation

I recommend the Board of Supervisors adopt Resolution No. 2015-_____ to support Stepping Up, a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jail.

Respectfully submitted,



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/mjk – October 26, 2015

Attachments

c: The Honorable Chris Nanos, Pima County Sheriff
The Honorable Kyle Bryson, Presiding Judge, Superior Court
Jan Leshar, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Medical Services
Ellen Wheeler, Assistant County Administrator
Amelia Cramer, Chief Deputy County Attorney
India Davis, Corrections Chief, Pima County Sheriff's Department
Danna Whiting, Director, Behavioral Health

THE
STEPPING UP
INITIATIVE

STEPPING UP: A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN NEWS OF JAILS serving more people with mental illnesses than in-patient treatment facilities was shocking. Now, it is not surprising to hear that jails across the nation serve an estimated 2 million people with serious mental illnesses each year¹—almost three-quarters of whom also have substance use disorders²—or that the prevalence of people with serious mental illnesses in jails is three to six times higher than for the general population.³ Once incarcerated, they tend to stay longer in jail and upon release are at a higher risk of returning than individuals without these disorders.

The human toll—and its cost to taxpayers—is staggering. Jails spend two to three times more on adults with mental illnesses that require intervention than on people without those needs,⁴ yet often do not see improvements in recidivism or recovery. Despite counties' tremendous efforts to address this problem, they are often thwarted by significant obstacles, such as coordinating multiple systems and operating with minimal resources. Without change, large numbers of people with mental illnesses will continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in missed opportunities to link them to treatment, tragic outcomes, inefficient use of funding, and failure to improve public safety.

The National Initiative

Recognizing the critical role local and state officials play in supporting change, the [National Association of Counties \(NACo\)](#), the [Council of State Governments \(CSG\) Justice Center](#), and the [American Psychiatric Foundation \(APF\)](#) have come together to lead a national initiative to help advance counties' efforts to reduce the number of adults with mental and co-occurring substance use disorders in jails. With support from the U.S. Justice Department's [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#), the initiative will build on the many innovative and proven practices being implemented across the country. The initiative engages a diverse group of organizations with expertise on these issues, including those representing sheriffs, jail administrators, judges, community corrections professionals, treatment providers, people with mental illnesses and their families, mental health and substance use program directors, and other stakeholders.

The initiative is about creating a long-term, national movement—not a moment in time—to raise awareness of the factors contributing to the over-representation of people with mental illnesses in jails, and then using practices and strategies that work to drive those numbers down. The initiative has two key components:

1. **A CALL TO ACTION** demonstrating strong county and state leadership and a shared commitment to a multi-step planning process that can achieve concrete results for jails in counties of all sizes.

The Call to Action is more than a vague promise for reform; it focuses on developing an actionable plan that can be used to achieve county and state system changes. As part of this Call to Action, county elected officials are being asked to pass a resolution and work with other leaders (e.g., the sheriff, district attorney, treatment providers, and state policymakers), people with mental illnesses and their advocates, and other stakeholders on the following six actions:

- **Convene or draw on a diverse team** of leaders and decision makers from multiple agencies committed to safely reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

- **Collect and review prevalence numbers and assess individuals' needs** to better identify adults entering jails with mental illnesses and their recidivism risk, and use that baseline information to guide decision making at the system, program, and case levels.
- **Examine treatment and service capacity** to determine which programs and services are available in the county for people with mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders, and identify state and local policy and funding barriers to minimizing contact with the justice system and providing treatment and supports in the community.
- **Develop a plan** with measurable outcomes that draws on the jail assessment and prevalence data and the examination of available treatment and service capacity, while considering identified barriers.
- **Implement research-based approaches** that advance the plan.
- **Create a process to track progress** using data and information systems, and to report on successes.

In addition to county leaders, national and state associations, criminal justice and behavioral health professionals, state and local policymakers, others with jail authority, and individuals committed to reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails should sign on to the Call to Action. Stepping Up participants will receive an online toolkit keyed to the six actions, with a series of exercises and related distance-learning opportunities, peer-to-peer exchanges, and key resources from initiative partners.⁵ The online toolkit will include self-assessment checklists and information to assist participants working in counties in identifying how much progress they have already made and a planning template to help county teams develop data-driven strategies that are tailored to local needs.

2. **A NATIONAL SUMMIT** to advance county-led plans to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

Supported by the American Psychiatric Foundation, a summit will be convened in the spring of 2016 in Washington, DC, that includes counties that have signed on to the Call to Action, as well as state officials and community stakeholders such as criminal justice professionals, treatment providers, people with mental illnesses and their advocates, and other subject-matter experts. The summit will help counties advance their plans and measure progress, and identify a core group of counties that are poised to lead others in their regions. Follow-up assistance will be provided to participants to help refine strategies that can be used in counties across the nation. After the 2016 summit, participants will be notified of potential opportunities for sites to be selected for more intensive assistance through federal and private grant programs.

Although much of the initiative focuses on county efforts, states will be engaged at every step to ensure that their legislative mandates, policies, and resource-allocation decisions do not create barriers to plan implementation.

To learn more about the initiative or to join the Call to Action, go to StepUpTogether.org.

Endnotes

1. Steadman, Henry, et al., "Prevalence of Serious Mental Illness among Jail Inmates." *Psychiatric Services* 60, no. 6 (2009): 761–765. These numbers refer to jail admissions. Even greater numbers of individuals have mental illnesses that are not "serious" mental illnesses, but still require resource-intensive responses.
2. Abram, Karen M., and Linda A. Teplin, "Co-occurring Disorders Among Mentally Ill Jail Detainees," *American Psychologist* 46, no. 10 (1991): 1036–1045.
3. Steadman, Henry, et al., "Prevalence of Serious Mental Illness among Jail Inmates."
4. See, e.g., Swanson, Jeffery, et al., *Costs of Criminal Justice Involvement in Connecticut: Final Report* (Durham: Duke University School of Medicine, 2011).
5. Among the key partners are the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#); [Major County Sheriffs' Association](#); [National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors](#); [National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors](#); [National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors](#); [National Council for Behavioral Health](#); [National Sheriffs' Association](#); and [Policy Research Associates](#).

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-

PIMA COUNTY

**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT STEPPING UP:
A NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER
OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN JAIL**

WHEREAS, counties routinely provide treatment services to the estimated 2 million people with serious mental illnesses booked into jail each year;

WHEREAS, prevalence rates of serious mental illnesses in jails are three to six times higher than for the general public;

WHEREAS, almost three-quarters of adults with serious mental illnesses in jails have co-occurring substance use disorders;

WHEREAS, adults with mental illnesses tend to stay longer in jail and, upon release, are at a higher risk of recidivism than people without these disorders;

WHEREAS, county jails spend two to three times more on adults with mental illnesses that require interventions compared to those without these treatment needs;

WHEREAS, without the appropriate treatment and services, people with mental illnesses continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic outcomes for these individuals and their families;

WHEREAS, Pima County and all counties take pride in their responsibility to protect and enhance the health, welfare, and safety of their residents in efficient and cost-effective ways;

WHEREAS, Pima County already has developed a Mental Health Support Team Policy Group, a Forensic Task Force and a Crisis Response Center, all of which are helping some people stay out of jail by offering mental health and substance use disorder treatment as an alternative to arrest and incarceration; and

WHEREAS, through Stepping Up, the National Association of Counties, The Council of State Governments Justice Center, and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation are encouraging public, private, and nonprofit partners to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Pima County hereby signs on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our county jail, commits to sharing lessons learned with other counties in the state and across the country to support a national initiative and encourages all county officials, employees, and residents to participate in Stepping Up. We resolve to utilize the comprehensive resources available through Stepping Up to:

- Draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers from multiple agencies committed to safely reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails;
- Collect and review prevalence numbers and assess individuals' needs to better identify adults entering jails with mental illnesses and their recidivism risk, and use that baseline information to guide decision making at the system, program, and case levels;

- Examine treatment and service capacity to determine which programs and services are available in the county for people with mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders, and identify state and local policy and funding barriers to minimizing contact with the justice system and providing treatment and supports in the community;
- Develop a plan with measurable outcomes that draws on the jail assessment and prevalence data and the examination of available treatment and service capacity, while considering identified barriers;
- Implement research-based approaches that advance the plan; and
- Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to report on successes.

Passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Pima County, Arizona, this ____ day of _____, 2015.

Chair, Pima County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Deputy Civil County Attorney

TOM WEAVER