

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of the “Stepping Up Initiative” to            )  
Reduce the Number of People with Mental                )  
Illnesses in Jails    )           Resolution No. 20-2015

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

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

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

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; and

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

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; and

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

WHEREAS, The Columbia County Sheriff is collaborating with other local law enforcement agencies, the courts, and local and regional mental health agencies to sponsor local crisis intervention training, training first responders related to mental health emergency assessment tools and alternatives to jail, and is also working with Portland State University to develop a restorative justice model; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby resolved, as follows:

1. The Columbia County Board of Commissioners, do hereby sign on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our county jail, commit to sharing

lessons learned with other counties in our state and across the country to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees and residents to participate in *Stepping Up*.

2. We resolve to utilize the comprehensive resources available through *Stepping Up* to: 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 illness and their recidivism risk; and use that baseline information to guide decision making; examine treatment and service capacity to determine which programs and services are available in the county for people with mental illness and co-occurring substances 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 needs and prevalence assessment data and 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.

Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2015.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By:   
Henry Heimuller, Chair

By:   
Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Earl Fisher, Commissioner

Approved as to form:

By:   
Office of County Counsel