



Lake County Illinois

Legislation Text

File #: 15-0540, **Version:** 1

Resolution promoting a Step Up Initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

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

WHEREAS, in 2014, Lake County had over 9,000 adults booked into our jail, with over 3,000 (42%) of the adults previously admitted in our jail, within the past three years; and

WHEREAS, in Lake County, an average of 600 psychological assessments per year are performed on adults involved with the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, in February 2015, our jail's electronic medical record snapshot reported 39.8% of the adults in our jail, received psychotropic medication; and

WHEREAS, in July 2013, to address concerns that adults released from our jail were running out of prescribed medications while waiting four to eight weeks for psychiatric service appointments. Lake County provided a pilot program with the goals to assist with medication maintenance, reduce recidivism, improve the adult's quality of life and increase post-jail release success. The pilot program provides five hours per week of services, administers prescription medications, and has served 147 adults released from the jail into the community; and

WHEREAS, increasing law enforcement and service staff training on crisis intervention and trauma informed care can ensure that all services and interactions are delivered in an environment perceived to be safe to all participants, and can assist in diverting adults from our jails and into treatment programs; and

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

WHEREAS, 64% of the 19th Judicial Circuit Court, Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring (TIM) Drug Court clients in 2012, had serious co-occurring substance use and mental health 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, jails have become a "holding area for the mentally ill, many of whom have been arrested for minor violations; 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, jails provide mental health treatment, adults are stabilized and released back into the community, and without follow up services the adults de-stabilize and are re-arrested;

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, Lake 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 19th Judicial Circuit Court, in collaboration with Lake County leaders and stakeholders, founded the Behavioral Health Treatment Court Collaborative (BHTCC) to enhance the services to those eligible including the specialty problem-solving courts: Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring (TIM) Drug, Mental Health, and Veterans' Courts; and

WHEREAS, through Stepping Up, 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, LET IT BE RESOLVED, THAT I, Chairman, Aaron Lawlor, on behalf of the Lake County Board, do hereby decree this 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 my state and across the country to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees and residents to participate in Stepping Up. We resolve to utilize the comprehensive resources available through Stepping Up to:

- Encourage 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, best-evidence approaches that advance the plan.
- Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to report on our successes.

DATED, at Waukegan, Lake County, Illinois on May 12, 2015.