

RESOLUTION
to join the Stepping Up Initiative
to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center, and the American Psychiatric Foundation 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; and

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 public; 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, Washoe County takes pride in its responsibility to protect and enhance the health, welfare and safety of its residents in efficient and cost-effective ways; and

WHEREAS, Washoe County has actively participated in the creation of a Mental Health Court, a Triage Center, and the Crossroads Program to help people stay out of jail by offering mental health and substance use disorder treatment and safe housing opportunities and recognizes that even more could be done to further alleviate the problem of over-representation of people with mental illnesses in jail;

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NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Washoe County Commissioners do hereby join the *Stepping Up Initiative* with the goal of reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in the Washoe County jail, and commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in Nevada and across the country and encourage all county officials, employees and residents to participate in the *Stepping Up Initiative*; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Washoe County will utilize the comprehensive resources available through the *Stepping Up Initiative* to:

- convene or draw upon 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.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2016.

Kitty K. Jung, Chairman

ATTEST:

County Clerk