



**APPROVED**

**Brunswick County Board of Commissioners**  
**ACTION AGENDA ITEM**  
**May 15, 2017**

**From:**  
Amanda Hutcheson

**Action Item # VI. - 3.**

Board of Commissioners - Resolution in Support of Stepping Up Initiative - (Commissioner Pat Sykes)

**Issue/Action Requested:**

Request that the Board of Commissioners approve a resolution in support of the Stepping Up Initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

**Background/Purpose of Request:**

It is estimated that 2 million people with serious mental illnesses are booked into county jails each year, and that the prevalence of serious mental illnesses in jails is three to six times higher than in the general population. Those with mental illnesses tend to stay in jail longer and are at a higher risk of recidivism upon release, and county jails spend more on adults with mental illnesses than on adults without such treatment needs. Through the Stepping Up initiative, the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Foundation encourage public, private and nonprofit partners to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jail.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Not Applicable

**Approved By County Attorney:**

Yes

**Advisory Board Recommendation:**

Not Applicable.

**County Manager's Recommendation:**

Recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve a resolution in support of the Stepping Up Initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description

- ☐ Resolution in Support of Stepping Up Initiative

*County of Brunswick*  
*Office of the County Commissioners*



**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF STEPPING UP INITIATIVE TO REDUCE THE  
NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN JAILS**

**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**, Brunswick 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

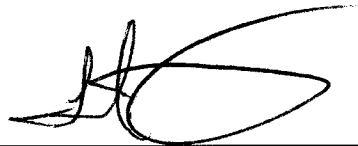
**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners has undertaken a serious effort to address the local service needs of those with mental illnesses through the appointment of a special Task Force; and

**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, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners does hereby support the *Stepping Up* Initiative 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 utilize the comprehensive resources available through *Stepping Up* to:

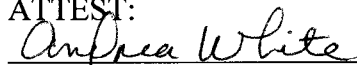
- Convene or draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers from multiple agencies committed to safely reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.
- Collect and review prevalence numbers and assess individuals' needs to better identify adults entering jails with mental illnesses 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 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 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.
- Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to report on successes.

This the 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2017.



Frank L. Williams, Chair  
Brunswick County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

  
Andrea White, Clerk

