

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF LANCASTER COUNTY, NEBRASKA**

**IN THE MATTER OF RECOMMITTING TO THE )  
STEPPING UP INITIATIVE TO REDUCE THE )  
NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS )  
IN JAILS INITIATIVE )**

**RESOLUTION NO. R-18-0030**

**WHEREAS**, the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) recognizes that: counties routinely provide treatment services to the estimated 2 million adults with serious mental illness booked into local jails each year; and

**WHEREAS**, prevalence rates of serious mental illness in jails are three to six times higher than for the general population, and almost three-quarters of adults with serious mental illness in jails have co-occurring substance use disorders; and

**WHEREAS**, jailed adults with mental illness tend to stay longer in jail and upon release are at a higher risk of recidivism than adults without a mental health condition; and

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

**WHEREAS**, without the appropriate treatment, services and intervention, adults with mental illness are at risk of continuing to cycle through the criminal justice system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lancaster County Community Corrections Department has established a number of programs to help reduce the number of mentally ill persons in the County’s jail, including: the Mental Health Diversion Program which works with individuals pre-booking to divert those with a serious mental illness or co-occurring substance abuse from incarceration and prosecution; the Veterans Diversion Program which works with veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); routine screening of all individuals in custody displaying serious mental health symptoms for pretrial release to receive mental health services; and a trauma screening program for all Adult Drug Court participants and persons in jail being considered for supervision by Community Corrections; and

**WHEREAS**, Lancaster County Corrections has Licensed Mental Health Practitioners on site and screens and identifies anyone with mental health symptoms at booking and during their incarceration, and is now implementing the Mental Health Jail Screening Instrument as part of the booking process for every person lodged into jail; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lancaster County Attorney’s Office supports and assists with programs to help reduce the number of individuals in the County’s jail who are affected by mental illness, including Lancaster County Mental Health Board hearings and alternatives to traditional criminal prosecution

through the Mental Health Diversion Program, the Veterans Diversion Program, and Adult Drug Court; and

**WHEREAS**, through the Stepping Up Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illness in Jails 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 explore strategies and access resources to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, that the Board supports the “Stepping Up Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illness in Jails” in order to reduce the number of people with mental illness in Lancaster County Corrections, and remains committed to sharing its experiences with other counties in Nebraska and across the country.

**DATED this 15th day of May, 2018.**

**BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LANCASTER COUNTY, NEBRASKA**

APPROVED AS TO FORM THIS  
15th day of May 2018.

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For PATRICK F. CONDON  
Lancaster County Attorney

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