Maricopa County
Proclamation

"Stepping Up Initiative to Safely Reduce the Number of People with Serious Mental Illnesses in Jails"
May 4, 2015

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

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

Whereas, nearly 10 percent of the Maricopa County jail population is comprised of people who have been diagnosed with serious mental illnesses; and

Whereas, people with serious mental illnesses tend to stay in jails longer, are at a higher risk of recidivism upon release, and return sooner than people without these disorders; and

Whereas, Maricopa County’s Strategic Plan commits to supporting safe communities and neighborhoods by providing access to a timely, integrated, and cost-effective smart justice system; and

Whereas, MCJustice, a Maricopa County interagency, criminal justice coordinating committee, has adopted strategic goals specific to improving public safety and treatment outcomes for persons with serious mental illnesses through the advancement of evidence based practices and data driven decision making; and

Whereas, individual and collaborative efforts by Maricopa County agencies, behavioral health and community partners have resulted in:

- The use of risk/need assessments to identify individuals with serious mental illnesses who can be safely released to treatment in the community;

- A data link between the jail and the behavioral health authority so individuals in the mental health system for serious mental illnesses who are booked into the jail are immediately identified;

- Cross-training for criminal justice and behavioral health personnel working in the community, jails, and the court system to increase their knowledge, skills, and awareness in addressing both the healthcare, and when warranted, the criminogenic needs of justice involved individuals with serious mental illnesses;

- Streamlined assessment and collaborative information sharing processes; new treatment programs and support services in the jail and community; expedited case processing and release of individuals with serious mental illnesses where safe to do so; comprehensive mental health courts; jail and community based peer and family support services; successful reintegration of individuals with serious mental illnesses reentering the community from jail; and
Whereas, through the Stepping Up initiative, the National Association of Counties, 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 MARICOPA COUNTY does hereby sign onto the Call to Action to safely reduce the number of people with serious mental illnesses in our county jail, commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in our state and across our 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 support and advance our ongoing commitment to:

- Identify individuals entering our jails with serious mental illnesses, assess their recidivism risk and needs, and use that baseline information to guide decision making consistent with strategic priorities.
- Examine treatment and service capacity to determine which programs and services are available in the county for people with serious 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 examines available treatment and service capacity, while considering identified barriers.
- Implement or expand existing research-based approaches that advance the plan, such as peer navigators, cognitive behavioral change and substance abuse treatment programs, ACT/FACT teams, and mobile crisis response units.
- Monitor progress using data and information systems, and report on successes.

DATED this 4th day of May, 2015.

Steve Chuhi, Chairman, District 2
Denny Barney, Supervisor, District 1
Andrew Kunasek, Supervisor, District 3
Clint Hickman, Supervisor, District 4
Steve Gallardo, Supervisor, District 5

ATTEST:
Fran McCarron, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors