

CITY of ALBUQUERQUE

TWENTY-FIRST COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. M-14-5 ENACTMENT NO. _____

SPONSORED BY: Brad Winter and Isaac Benton

1 MEMORIAL

2 CALLING FOR THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO, THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE,

3 AND BERNALILLO COUNTY TO FORM A TASK FORCE TO DISCUSS JOINT

4 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND TO PROPOSE RECOMMENDATIONS TO

5 ADDRESS THE ISSUES SURROUNDING AND CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH

6 ISSUES WITHIN THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

7 WHEREAS, the inability of the system to adequately address individuals in

8 mental health crises taxes other community resources such as hospital

9 emergency rooms, homeless shelters, emergency response teams, detox

10 facilities (for those who self-medicate) and other service systems that address

11 the manifestations of individuals in crisis; and

12 WHEREAS, on an individual level, the arrest and detention of the mentally

13 ill in crisis is a re-traumatizing and destabilizing event disrupting service

14 systems that may be in place and exacerbating the crisis; and

15 WHEREAS, this can and does lead to tragic consequences in escalating

16 encounters with law enforcement and suicidal behavior in detention; and

17 WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque recognizes the behavioral health

18 crisis within the metro area as well as in Bernalillo County and throughout the

19 State of New Mexico; and

20 WHEREAS, studies show that the great majority of homeless mentally ill

21 individuals can be engaged in treatment, housing and support services, but

22 insufficient capacity exists in New Mexico to meet the needs of these

23 individuals and families; and

24 WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) is not the proper

25 venue to send those who struggle with a mental illness; and

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1 WHEREAS, among recommended priorities, the report includes the need
2 for: crisis services and jail/hospital alternatives; integrated services for
3 persons with multiple or co-occurring needs, especially those with mental
4 illness and substance abuse; transition services for adults with behavioral
5 health needs who are leaving prisons and jails; assertive community treatment
6 and/or intensive case management or community support services for adults
7 with serious mental illness; and housing for adults to establish and maintain
8 stability in the community; and

9 WHEREAS, of all services utilized by persons with mental health needs,
10 especially emergency services, 10-15 % of this group (that is, the most
11 seriously mentally ill) use approximately 70% of services; and

12 WHEREAS, high utilization of expensive emergency services such as
13 hospital emergency rooms, police and ambulance calls, by high-needs
14 severely mentally ill individuals means less availability of these services to
15 many more individuals in the community; and

16 WHEREAS, identifying and providing high-needs, seriously mentally ill
17 individuals with housing and case management decreased emergency service
18 utilization in Albuquerque by 31% according to the Albuquerque Housing
19 Home Cost Study in 2013; and

20 WHEREAS, a 2006 Bureau of Justice Statistics report estimated that 64% of
21 jail inmates had a mental health problem based on clinical interviews of the
22 inmate populations; and

23 WHEREAS, in March of 2014, MDC had a total of 969 individuals on the
24 Psych Services Unit caseload at MDC; this is 52% of the MDC population; and

25 WHEREAS, mental illness among inmates is associated with higher
26 incidences of homelessness as researchers generally estimate that 25-50% of
27 the homeless population has a history of incarceration; and

28 WHEREAS, a lack of safe and stable housing alternatives for mentally ill
29 persons coming out of jail contributes to the risk of health decompensation,
30 criminal activity and recidivism; and

31 WHEREAS, in 2004 a report by the Arizona State University Applied
32 Behavioral Health Policy group found that according to estimates from the
33 National Survey on Drug Abuse found that New Mexico had the largest

1 treatment gap of any state with 3.5% of the population needing drug treatment
2 services but not receiving treatment; and

3 WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the State of New Mexico, the City of
4 Albuquerque, and Bernalillo County to work together to offer resources to
5 better provide options and solutions both for our law enforcement and those
6 with a mental illness.

7 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF
8 ALBUQUERQUE:

9 That the City of Albuquerque calls for unanimous support and action at the
10 State of New Mexico, City of Albuquerque, and Bernalillo County levels to
11 address the mental illness crisis within our great State by formulating a task
12 force that will seek funding from these entities and will work towards service
13 strategies that will benefit our entire community.

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