



BERNALILLO COUNTY TO FORM A TASK FORCE TO DISCUSS JOINT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND TO PROPOSE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES SURROUNDING AND CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES WITHIN THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, the inability of the system to adequately address individuals in mental health crises taxes other community resources such as hospital emergency rooms, homeless shelters, emergency response teams, detox facilities (for those who self-medicate) and other service systems that address the manifestations of individuals in crisis; and

WHEREAS, on an individual level, the arrest and detention of the mentally ill in crisis is a re-traumatizing and destabilizing event disrupting service systems that may be in place and exacerbating the crisis; and

WHEREAS, this can and does lead to tragic consequences in escalating encounters with law enforcement and suicidal behavior in detention; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque recognizes the behavioral health crisis within the metro area as well as in Bernalillo County and throughout the State of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, studies show that the great majority of homeless mentally ill individuals can be engaged in treatment, housing and support services, but insufficient capacity exists in New Mexico to meet the needs of these individuals and families; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) is not the proper venue to send those who struggle with a mental illness; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, in 2004 a report by the Arizona State University Applied Behavioral Health Policy group found that according to estimates from the National Survey on Drug Abuse found that New Mexico had the largest treatment gap of any state with 3.5% of the population needing drug treatment services but not receiving treatment; and

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

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

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

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