



NEVADA COUNTY

PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Memo

MEETING DATE: December 13, 2016

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael Ertola
Probation Department

SUBJECT: Resolution to formally participate in the “Stepping Up” initiative.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Resolution.

FUNDING: Not applicable.

BACKGROUND: Each year, there are an estimated 2 million people with serious mental illnesses admitted to jails across the nation. That’s equivalent to the populations of Vermont and New Hampshire—combined. Almost three-quarters of these adults also have drug and alcohol use problems. Once incarcerated, individuals with mental illnesses tend to stay longer in jail and upon release are at a higher risk of returning to incarceration than those without these illnesses.

The human toll of this problem—and its cost to taxpayers—is staggering. Jails spend two to three times more money on adults with mental illnesses that require intervention than on those without those needs, yet often do not see improvements to public safety or these individuals’ health. Although counties have made tremendous efforts to address this problem, they are often thwarted by significant obstacles, including operating with minimal resources and needing better coordination between criminal justice, mental health, substance use treatment, and other agencies. Without change, large numbers of people with mental illnesses will continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic outcomes for these individuals and their families, missed opportunities for connections to treatment, inefficient use of funding, and a failure to improve public safety.

Despite important efforts already underway in Nevada County, there is an urgent need to address this national crisis using a common, data-driven process that encourages innovation and brings good work to scale. The time is now to launch a nationwide initiative to provide coordinated support to counties to help people living with mental illnesses stay out of jail and on a path to recovery. Nevada County can join other counties in passing a resolution to support the “Stepping Up” initiative.

Item Initiated by: Angelina Coffey, Administrative Services Associate

Approved by: Michael Ertola, Chief Probation Officer

Submittal Date: 11/01/2016