



## **NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS THE STEPPING UP INITIATIVE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN JAILS**

**WHEREAS**, the National Sheriffs' Association recognizes jails have become de facto psychiatric facilities nationwide with more than 2 million individuals with serious mental illnesses admitted each year; and

**WHEREAS**, an estimated three-quarters of individuals with serious mental illnesses in jails also have substance use disorders; and

**WHEREAS**, jails spend two to three times more on individuals with mental illnesses, yet fail to see improvements to public safety, recidivism rates, or individuals' recovery; and

**WHEREAS**, keeping individuals out of jails and on the road to recovery requires a collaborative approach between all criminal justice agencies and mental health and substance use treatment agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, the Stepping Up Initiative encourages county leaders to designate or convene a diverse team of leaders and stakeholders to carry out a six-step planning process that can yield measurable reductions in the number of adults with mental illnesses cycling through the nations jails; and

**WHEREAS**, the Initiative provides sheriffs, others with jail authorities, and other team members with no-cost distance-learning opportunities, peer-to-peer exchanges, expert guidance, and a suite of resources to carry out these county-led plans; and

**WHEREAS**, the Initiative promotes crisis intervention team training and other specialized law enforcement responses that are supported by community-based resources; and

**WHEREAS**, the Initiative brings together not only state and local policymakers and purse-string holders, but also ensures the voices of people with mental illnesses and their families are heard; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Sheriffs' Association actively supports the work of the Stepping Up Initiative that is led by the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center, and the American Psychiatric Foundation to make more effective use of strained budgets and safely reduce the number of adults with mental illnesses in jails by connecting them to community-based treatment and services when possible; and

**BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the National Sheriffs' Association strongly urges county elected officials to pass a resolution or proclamation that signifies their commitment to joining the Stepping Up Initiative.