Stepping Up Initiative Resolution TEMPLATE

"Stepping Up Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails" – Date

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

WHEREAS, prevalence rates of serious mental illnesses in jails are three to six times higher than for the general population; and

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

WHEREAS, adults with mental illnesses tend to stay longer in jail and upon release are at a higher risk of recidivism than people without these disorders; and

WHEREAS, county jails spend two to three times more on adults with mental illnesses that require interventions compared to those without these treatment needs; and

WHEREAS, without the appropriate treatment and services, people with mental illnesses continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic outcomes for these individuals and their families; and

WHEREAS, [INSERT YOUR COUNTY'S NAME] and all counties take pride in their responsibility to protect and enhance the health, welfare and safety of its residents in efficient and cost-effective ways; and

WHEREAS, [INSERT COUNTY SPECIFIC INFO/DATA TO HIGHLIGHT e.g. Bexar County has developed its Restoration Center which helps people stay out of jail by offering mental health and substance use disorder treatment]; and

WHEREAS, through the *Stepping Up* initiative, the National Association of Counties, the 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, LET IT BE RESOLVED, THAT I [INSERT NAME & TITLE OF CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL], do hereby sign on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our county jail, commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in my state and across the 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:

- Convene or draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers from multiple agencies committed to safely reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

TEMPLATE

- Collect and review prevalence numbers and assess individuals' needs to better identify adults entering jails with mental illnesses and their recidivism risk, and use that baseline information to guide decision making.
- Examine treatment and service capacity to determine which programs and services are available in the county for people with 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 examination of available treatment and service capacity, while considering identified barriers.
- Implement research-based approaches that advance the plan.
- Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to report on successes.

PASSED AND APPROVED in this _____ day of _____, 2015.

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