

1 **RESOLUTION URGING THE FULTON COUNTY JUSTICE SYSTEM AND**
2 **PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES, THE FULTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF**
3 **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AND ALL**
4 **EMPLOYEES OF SAID AGENCIES AND SAID DEPARTMENT TO REDUCE**
5 **THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE FULTON**
6 **COUNTY JAIL, FULTON COUNTY COURTS, GREATER FULTON COUNTY**
7 **COMMUNITY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**
8

9 **WHEREAS**, Fulton County, in conjunction with the Fulton County Sheriff, operates the
10 jail in the most populous county in the State of Georgia; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the Superior Court of Fulton County, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, is the largest
12 and busiest trial court in Georgia, serving the County's almost one million residents;

13 **WHEREAS**, counties throughout the country routinely provide treatment services to the
14 estimated two million people with serious mental illnesses booked into jail each year as a result
15 of their involvement in the criminal justice system; and

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

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

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

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

24 **WHEREAS**, without the appropriate treatment and services, persons with mental
25 illnesses continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic outcomes
26 for such persons and their families; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Fulton County takes pride in its responsibility to protect and enhance the
2 health, welfare and safety of its residents in efficient and cost-effective ways; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Fulton County has established its Department of Behavioral Health &
4 Developmental Disabilities which serves individuals involved in the criminal justice system by
5 providing treatment and offering assistance with mental illness both while in custody and upon
6 discharge; and

7 **WHEREAS**, the Fulton County Superior Court has established a Behavioral Health
8 Treatment Court, which has been effective in dealing with the problem of recurring arrests of
9 individuals diagnosed with mental illness, by utilizing community collaborations and
10 partnerships to meet the mental health needs of the participants; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative was funded to develop a plan to reduce
12 the number of inmates in the jail, increase the speed at which cases are processed, and address
13 the number of inmates with mental illness; and

14 **WHEREAS**, through the Stepping Up Initiative, the National Association of Counties,
15 the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Foundation are
16 encouraging public, private and nonprofit partners to reduce the number of people with mental
17 illnesses in jails;


18 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of Fulton
19 County, Georgia hereby signs on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of people with
20 mental illnesses in the Fulton County Jail, commits to sharing lessons learned with other counties
21 in Georgia and across the country to support a national initiative and encourages all County
22 officials, employees and residents to participate in Stepping Up.

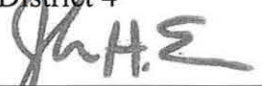
1 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that all Fulton County Justice System and Public
2 Safety Agencies and the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities and
3 their employees are urged to utilize the comprehensive resources available through Stepping Up
4 to:

- 5 • Convene or draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers from
6 multiple agencies committed to safely reducing the number of people with mental
7 illnesses in jails as a result of their involvement in the criminal justice system.
- 8 • Collect and review prevalence numbers and assess individuals' needs to better
9 identify adults entering jails with mental illnesses and their recidivism risk, and
10 use that baseline information to guide decision making at the system, program and
11 case levels.
- 12 • Examine treatment and service capacity to determine which programs and
13 services are available in the county for people with mental illnesses and co-
14 occurring substance use disorders, and identify state and local policy and funding
15 barriers to minimizing contact with the criminal justice system and providing
16 treatment and supports in the community.
- 17 • Develop a plan with measurable outcomes that draws on the jail assessment and
18 prevalence data and the examination of available treatment and service capacity,
19 while considering identified barriers.
- 20 • Implement research-based approaches that advance the plan.
- 21 • Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to
22 report on successes.

23
24 **SO PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County,
25 Georgia this 4th day of May, 2016.

26
27 **SPONSORED BY:**

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29 _____
30 Joan P. Garner, Commissioner
31 District 4

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33 _____
34 John H. Eaves, Chairman
35 District 7, At-Large

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38 ITEM # 16-0386 RM 5/4/16
39 REGULAR MEETING
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ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Mark Massey
Mark Massey, Clerk to the Commission

Patrise Perkins-Hooker
Patrise Perkins-Hooker, County Attorney

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ITEM # 16-0386 RM 5/4/16
REGULAR MEETING