

**MINUTES
THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT ACCESS
LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE**

June 18, 2015

The Behavioral Health Treatment Access Legislative Task Force met at 1:30 p.m., on Thursday, June 18, 2015, in Room B-MAC, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Task Force members present: Senator Scott Flippo, Representative Clarke Tucker, Carole Baxter, Ann Brown, Dan Honey, David Sterling, and David Williams.

Other Legislative Member present: Senators Jonathan Dismang, Jeremy Hutchinson, and Representatives Eddie Armstrong, Trevor Drown, and Dan Sullivan.

Representative Tucker called the meeting to order. The minutes from the May 28, 2015 meeting were approved by acclamation.

Cost Analysis of Arkansas Mental Health and Prison Reform Report

Mr. Jim Metzger, President, HISTECON Associates, presented an overview of Cost Analysis of Arkansas Mental Health and Prison Reform Report (**Exhibit C**). Mr. Metzger said according to his firm's research, approximately 3,500 mentally-ill adults and 100 mentally-ill juveniles are currently in Arkansas prisons and jails. Mr. Metzger addressed the following issues of placing low-risk mentally-ill offenders in the state's prison system:

- Prison facilities cannot provide professional crisis services for mentally-ill offenders
- There is a financial impact to the state's budget adjudicating mentally-ill offenders
- Avoiding litigation cost regarding constitutional challenges to the mandate

Mr. Metzger's research indicates cost to the state to incarcerate low-risk mentally-ill offenders is 20 times higher than the cost would be to provide crisis treatment and counseling centers. Based on the current jail and prison populations, diverting low-risk mentally-ill offenders to crisis treatment centers can save the state millions in budget dollars and reduce recidivism rates for mentally-ill offenders by half.

Ms. Baxter requested the Division of Behavioral Health Services provide the task force data on the number of mental-ill offenders currently under the 911 Program and the cost to treat each individual while under the 911 Program; and the number of assertive community team (ACT) teams operating across the state.

Mr. Sterling suggested the task force look at the recidivism rates in the state and the cost of placing mentally-ill offenders in prison.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.