

APPROVED MAY 24, 2016

EXHIBIT B

**MINUTES
LEGISLATIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE OVERSIGHT TASK FORCE
MEETING**

Thursday, April 28, 2016

The Legislative Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, April 28, 2016, in the Multi-Complex Building (MAC Room B) in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Committee members present: Senator Jeremy Hutchinson, Co-Chair; Representative Matthew Shepherd, Co-Chair; and Representative Dwight Tosh; Judge Gary Arnold, Judge Cristi Beaumont, Chief Kenton Buckner, Mr. Ken Casady, Mr. John Felts, Mr. John Wesley Hall, Mr. Tim Helder, Ms. Wendy Kelley, Mr. Steve Newsom, and Ms. Sheila Sharp.

Other legislators present: Representatives Bob Ballinger, David Fielding, and Clarke Tucker.

Senator Hutchinson called the meeting to order.

Approval of the Minutes [Exhibit B]

Without objection, the Minutes from the March 11, 2016, meeting of the Legislative Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force were approved.

Discussion of the Stepping Up National Summit [Handouts 2-4]

The Honorable David Hudson, County Judge, Sebastian County, and Mr. Bill Hollenbeck, Sheriff, Sebastian County, were recognized. Mr. Hudson presented a letter by Mr. Daniel Shue, Prosecuting Attorney, Judicial District, regarding the Sebastian County Mental Health Court and discussed two articles titled, "Officials: "Jailing Mentally Ill is not the Best Answer" and " Unprecedented National Summit Gathers Teams from 50 Counties to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails" [see Handouts 2-4 for full report].

Mr. Hudson gave a brief update on the Stepping Up National Summit. Stepping Up was designed to give attendees a clear understanding of what constitutes a comprehensive, system-level plan that will reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jail. The Stepping Up Initiative is designed to rally national, state, and local leaders around the goal of achieving an actual reduction in the number of people with mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders in jail. Over the past year, more than 250 counties, representing nearly 30% of the U.S. population, have passed resolutions to advance the goals of Stepping Up. Some key areas that were discussed during the Summit included:

- screening and assessments;
- type of baseline data that currently exists and how to track it;
- how many inmates are taking psychotropic drugs; and
- comprehensive assessment of processes.

Mr. Hudson will provide more information to the Task Force regarding the Summit and resource materials.

According to Mr. Hudson, since 2005, the Pulaski County Jail has been under investigation and review by the United States' Justice Department. He noted Sebastian County will reassemble its criminal justice coordinating committee, comprised of key decision makers to review how the system operates and how to change the policy. Notably, individuals that are incarcerated with mental illness cost more money and stay in jail longer with no good results.

Mr. Hudson announced a meeting will convene in Fort Smith on May 19, 2016, to discuss various issues regarding the mentally ill and law enforcement. Mr. Leon Evans, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Center for Health Care Services in San Antonio, Texas, will be the guest speaker, Mr. Evans is familiar with crisis intervention training for law enforcement and crisis intervention treatment facilities to divert the mentally ill. He will discuss the program currently in place at the Texas facility. Senator Hutchinson requested that an invitation to this event be sent to committee staff for distribution to the Task Force.

Sheriff Hollenbeck stated it has been proven that individuals with mental illness will stay incarcerated up to three times longer than those who does not have a mental health illness. Officers need to be better trained to deal with individuals with a mental illness. Forty-five states have implemented diversion training for law enforcement to deal with the mentally ill. A stabilization unit is important to diverting an individual with a mental illness from incarceration. Mental health courts are vitally important, as they can ensure that outpatient services are provided to the individuals. Partnering

with law enforcement agencies will help to eliminate overcrowding in jails.

Addressing a National Crisis: Too Many People with Mental Illnesses in our Jails [Handout 1]

Mr. Mike Thompson, Director, Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSGJC), and Mr. Will Engelhardt, Senior Policy Analyst, CSGJC, were recognized and presented a PowerPoint presentation titled, “*Addressing a National Crisis: Too Many People with Mental Illnesses in our Jails*” (see Handout 1 for full report). Mr. Thompson stated there are 11,602,175 jail admissions each year compared to 222,565 prison admissions. Nationally, jails have reported an increase in the number of people with mental illnesses. Seventeen percent of the jail population has a serious mental illness. Some factors that are driving the crisis include disproportionately higher rates of arrest, longer stays in jail and prison, limited access to health care, higher recidivism rates, and more criminogenic risk factors.

Mr. Engelhardt stated some key challenges counties face include the ability to be data driven, connecting individuals with evidence-based practices, continuity of care, and measuring results. The following six key questions can determine whether a county is positioned to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jail:

1. Is your leadership committed?
2. Do you have timely screening and assessment?
3. Do you have baseline data?
4. Have you conducted a comprehensive process analysis and service inventory?
5. Have you prioritized policy, practice, and funding?
6. Do you track progress?

Mr. Thompson stated some steps Arkansas counties can take that will have a significant impact on addressing the aforementioned questions include envisioning a process, tailoring a document for the counties across the state, convening a statewide summit, and determining the states’ role in supporting the counties. Senator Hutchinson stated the Arkansas Association of Counties could assist with the planning arrangements and preparation for the summit to be held this summer.

Mr. Hall made a motion to convene a statewide summit. The motion was seconded by Mr. Helder. Without objection, the motion was approved.

Upon request by Senator Hutchinson regarding a motion for the task force’s recommendations for addressing people with mental illnesses in Arkansas jails, Mr. Thompson stated Arkansas will need the following:

- more concrete practical data from the state and counties;
- convene a meeting with pertinent individuals from DHS, local providers, and counties;
- get results for the aforementioned questions from counties, and discussion of the types of services that need to be available in the communities for individuals, as counties will need to develop a proposal; and
- proceed with a statewide summit.

Judge Beaumont stated Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is an essential part of the discussion and suggested that it be incorporated into the State Police’s basic training and made available for individual police officers, sheriffs, deputies, and other pertinent individuals. Chief Buckner noted the Little Rock Police Department has implemented de-escalation and CIT training for new police recruits and incorporated it into the 40 hours of in-service training that everyone is required to go through annually.

Mr. Mike Rose, Citizen, was recognized. He spoke about his personal experiences and the challenges he has encountered as a person who suffers from mental illness. He stated individuals with mental illness are going to be in denial when they have an encounter with law enforcement officers, as they are afraid to answer any questions. Mr. Rose applauded the task force for their efforts and offered to help the task force to better understand what mental illness is all about.

Dr. Cheryl May, Director, Criminal Justice Institute (CJI), University of Arkansas System, was recognized. She stated CJI is involved in providing advanced training and educational opportunities for law enforcement across the state. CJI, in collaboration with the Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police, developed a class for policing individuals with behavioral health issues. She noted classes are offered online or face-to-face.

Senator Hutchinson announced the task force will convene a meeting on May 24, 2016, in Rogers or Little Rock.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.