

## **A RESOLUTION OF THE JACKSON COUNTY DEMOCRATS**

Resolution No. 2020-2

### **Jackson County Should Provide Adequate Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Funding, Facilities, & Staff**

**Whereas**, nationwide, 1 in 5 people are locked up for a drug offense. Of those convicted, the majority are for drug possession and not for drug sales (1); and

**Whereas**, 40% of jail inmates have reported being diagnosed with a mental health disorder (2-3) with mental health experts estimating that at least half of the prison population suffer from a psychiatric disorder (4) and Oregon ranks among the most challenged states in the nation for substance abuse and mental health problems, while at the same time ranking among the worst states for access and engagement with care (5); and

**Whereas**, the lack of a diversion program (6) now requires patients in a mental health crisis to be transported to the jail, rather than to an appropriate facility designed to handle mental health emergencies (7). Said patients are then processed into the jail, whereupon they must reapply for their health insurance if their stay is 48 hours or more (8-9); and

**Whereas**, the lack of adequate mental health care and substance use disorder treatment in Jackson County and the delay in referral to needed extended services at discharge from the jail contribute to recidivism (10); and

**Whereas**, improving mental health diversion, jail facility treatment, and post discharge care for those suffering from mental health and substance use disorders will slow the frequency of rearrests, thereby benefiting not only those who are suffering, but also Jackson County taxpayers and all community members through improved utilization of county funds and improving community safety (11); and

**Whereas**, mentally ill inmates cost more to care for, have longer terms in jail and are more likely to commit suicide. Nationwide, there are 10 times more mentally ill patients in jail than in mental health facilities (12); and

**Whereas**, several Oregon counties have developed robust crisis response programs. Marion County's program has 7.5 FTE permanent masters level mental health professionals and 15-20 temporary professionals, with 3 full time law enforcement/mental health mobile teams. This program has reduced jail bookings from 18,000 in 2006 to 16,000 in 2015. Lane County's CAHOOTS program has 12 full time crisis response therapists, that responded to 24,000 calls in 2018. The program saved the county an estimated \$8.5 million annually on police call visits and an additional \$737,000 on unnecessary ambulance and emergency room charges (13); and

**Whereas**, the Jackson County commissioners also passed a resolution on 9/4/19 "Proclaiming Addiction to be a Public Health Crisis" (14).

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE JACKSON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1:** We urge the Jackson County commissioners to:

- a)** develop a 24/7 mobile crisis response program similar, if not identical, to programs offered in Marion and Lane Counties, in order to reduce the number of non-violent individuals with mental illness and addictive behavior in our jail.
- b)** to strengthen services offered to residents with mental illness and addiction, both to lessen the need for incarceration and improve the transition into needed services for those who may be incarcerated.
- c)** work toward improving referral and placement services at the time of discharge for all inmates needing extended mental health, addiction, and disability services. Serious consideration should be given to enhancement of transitional housing, such as that provided by Rogue Retreat and similar organizations.

**Section 2:** We encourage the Jackson County commissioners to follow the spirit of their 9/4/19 Resolution. As the designated local mental health authority, our commissioners should work with the Coordinated Care Organizations (C.C.O.s) to provide the services needed for adequate care for those in need of mental health, addiction and disability services.

**REFERENCES:**

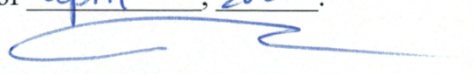
1. Mass Incarceration the Whole Pie by Wendy Sawyer and Pete Wagner:  
<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2019.html>
2. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/09/19/647270042/county-jails-struggle-to-treat-mentally-ill-inmates>
3. Bureau of Justice statistics from “Indicators of Mental Health Problems Reported by Prisoners and Jail Inmates 2011-2012.”: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/imhprpi1112.pdf>
4. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/04/25/605666107/insane-americas-3-largest-psychiatric-facilities-are-jails>
5. Report and Findings for Senate Bill 1041, 2019  
<https://www.oregon.gov/cjc/CJC%20Document%20Library/SB1041Report.pdf>
6. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/jailexpansion.html>
7. <https://www.psychom.net/how-to-reduce-mental-illness-in-prisons>
8. <https://mailtribune.com/news/top-stories/ashland-and-jackson-county-officials-meet-over-jail-dispute>
9. Oregon Health Authority: Medicaid Eligibility for Inmates of Jails and Prisons, 2014, page 2.
10. Jail Advisory Steering Committee 7/8/19 slide presentation.
11. Broken Ground: Why America Keeps Building More Jails and What It Can Do Instead: Vera Institute of Justice Report, 2019, page 38-41.
12. Serious Mental Illness Prevalence in Jails and Prisons Background Paper, 2016:  
<https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/evidence-and-research/learn-more-about/3695>

13. Mail Tribune 9/30/19: [https://medfordmailtribune-or.newsmemory.com/?publink=57ec9b542\\_13410f6](https://medfordmailtribune-or.newsmemory.com/?publink=57ec9b542_13410f6)

14. Jackson County Commissioners Order number 163-19: <https://jacksoncountyor.org/Board-of-Commissioners/Proclamations>

Resolution submitted by the Platform and Resolutions Committee.

**ADOPTED** by the Jackson County Democratic Party Central Committee on the 23rd day of April, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tonia Moro,  
Chair, Jackson County Democratic Party

8/7/20  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date