

Establishing A Policy Requiring An Ulster County Crisis Stabilization Center, And Requesting The Initiation Of The Procurement Process To Secure Services For Individuals Experiencing Mental Health And/ Or Substance Use Crisis

Referred to: The Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee (Chairwoman Walter and Legislators Fabiano, Haynes, Heppner and Parete), and The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, Ronk, and Walter)

Chairwoman of the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee, Eve Walter, offers the following:

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 410 of October 15, 2019 established the Ulster County Criminal Justice Reform Task Force (UC-CJRTF) which has set forth to evaluate existing and potential criminal justice programs, to ensure the best and most cost-effective delivery of services, and to explore opportunities for program expansion to help the greatest number of county residents who may be in need of services; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature is in receipt of, and has reviewed, the report of the UC-CJRTF; and

WHEREAS, the report finds that according to the National Survey of Drug Use and Health, people living with mental illness in New York are more likely to encounter the criminal justice system, resulting in a large number of arrests and incarcerations; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County sees an average of 30 opioid overdoses each month, a rate driven consistently higher since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with Ulster County HEAL reporting 526 confirmed opioid-related overdoses and 71 fatalities in our County from May 2020 through May 2021; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, Ulster County lost its only inpatient emergency mental health and substance abuse recovery beds when Westchester Medical Center/Health Alliance of the Hudson Valley moved their beds to Dutchess County to make room for a potential surge in COVID-19 patients; and

WHEREAS, while law enforcement utilizes the psychiatric emergency room when the need arises, many are faced extreme delays in access to intervention services, or a lack of available mental health and/or detox beds, resulting in an estimated 65% of those seen in our regional psychiatric emergency room being directly discharged, supporting the need for non-hospital level services for these individuals; and

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WHEREAS, the UC-CJRTF finds that Ulster County residents who experience mental or substance abuse crisis deserve a 24-hour/7-day a week Crisis Stabilization Center to immediately connect individuals experiencing mental health and/or substance use crisis with an integrated team of clinical counselors, peer specialists, and behavioral health professionals, as well as access to our local community's health and human service providers, to address any mental health, addiction, or social determinant of health needs; and

WHEREAS, it is expected that approximately 200 individuals will be served monthly when the center is at full capacity; and

WHEREAS, the parameters for a county crisis stabilization center are outlined through approved amendments to the New York State Mental Hygiene law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, it shall be the policy of Ulster County to have a Crisis Stabilization Center which operates 24 hours/day, 7 days per week, with sufficient staffing including: administrative staff, credentialed alcohol and substance abuse counselors (CASAC), social workers and/or otherwise licensed counselor, case managers, and certified recovery peer advocates (CPRA); with priority given to individualized with personal lived recovery experience for mental health illness or substance abuse; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that in furtherance of this policy, the Ulster County Legislature requests the County Executive, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health and Mental Health, develop and initiate the request for proposals (RFP) procurement process to contract for the implementation and provision of services for individuals experiencing mental health and/or substance use crisis, and required to administer the Center; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature be advised in writing of any and all RFP's issued pursuant to a crisis stabilization center in Ulster County,

and move its adoption.

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ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Passed Committee: Law Enforcement and Public Safety on _____.

Passed Committee: Ways and Means on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

TBD