

Establishing A Policy To Prioritize The Mental And Behavioral Health Needs Of Ulster County By Initiating Assessment And Determining A Five-Year Plan

Referred to: The Health, Human Services and Housing Committee (Chairman Uchitelle and Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Stewart), and The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Cahill, Roberts, Ronk, and Walter)

Legislator Eve Walter offers the following:

WHEREAS, in Ulster County as with across the county, COVID-19 exposed and exacerbated the mental and behavioral health crisis where people in need are not receiving care in a timely manner if at all resulting in preventable morbidity and mortality and according to the 2022 County Health Ranking Report, Ulster County showed higher rates of poor mental health days, excessive drinking, reports of frequent mental distress, and suicide compared to New York State overall; and

WHEREAS, between 2009 and 2013 Ulster County slowly moved toward mental health privatization including eliminating programs such as eight outpatient chemical dependence clinics in Kingston, Highland, and Ellenville and the consolidation of the County's Mental Health Department under the Department of Health; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, through dual initiatives of the executive and legislative offices we have begun to revitalize our mental and behavioral health services through county-provided programs such as opioid response through law enforcement, enhanced MAT care for incarcerated individuals, the creation of a mental and behavioral health crisis stabilization and respite houses, and the re-creation of a distinct Ulster County Department of Mental Health along with expanded contractual services including, mobile mental health, behavioral health urgent care, and mental health in schools; and

WHEREAS, the time is prime to take full stock of the full spectrum of services we provide internally and through contracts, identify gaps in care, and set a clear five-year vision of the operations of our new Department of Mental Health; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § C-74 B. (4) of the Ulster County Charter, the Ulster County Purchasing Director shall perform such other and related duties as shall be required and delegated by the County Executive or County Legislature; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, it is hereby the policy of Ulster County to prioritize the mental and behavioral health needs of the County by initiating the assessment of the current mental and behavior health needs of Ulster County, with a goal of implementing a five (5) year action plan; and, be it further

Resolution No. 77 March 21, 2023

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RESOLVED, that the Director of Purchasing, in coordination with the Commissioner of Mental Health and the Community Services Board, shall within ninety (90) days of adoption of this Resolution, issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) on behalf of Ulster County to 1) pull together 2022 data on Ulster County mental and behavior health needs and delivery distinguishing care provided through county program from those provided by contract agencies; 2) evaluate these data to identify gaps in care; 3) map out a plan identifying any services to be transitioned from contracted care to county-delivered; 4) conduct a cost-benefit analysis of these proposed changes; 5) set a five-year time line for any proposed change; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that prior to the RFP document being public, the Chair of the Legislature, or designee, shall have opportunity to provide input on the document; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the Chair of the Legislature, or designee shall serve as a member of the RFP evaluation committee; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that no section of this resolution shall be interpreted as augmenting the existing legislative process for expenditures; and, be it further

RESOLVED, upon conclusion of the RFP process, a contract for execution shall be presented to the Ulster County Legislature for consideration pursuant to § A2-5 (15) of the Ulster County Charter,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 20 NOES: 0
(Absent: Legislators Hansut, Litts and Ronk)

Passed Committee: Health, Human Services and Housing on March 1, 2023

Passed Committee: Ways and Means on March 7, 2023

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
TBD

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STATE OF NEW YORK

ss:

COUNTY OF ULSTER

I, the undersigned Clerk of the Legislature of the County of Ulster, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is the original resolution adopted by the Ulster County Legislature on the 21st Day of March in the year Two Thousand Twenty-Three, and said resolution shall remain on file in the office of said clerk.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the County of Ulster this 24th Day of March in the year Two Thousand Twenty-Three.

[s] Victoria A. Fabella
Victoria A. Fabella, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature

Submitted to the County Executive this
24th Day of March 2023.

[s] Victoria A Fabella
Victoria A. Fabella, Clerk
Ulster County Legislature

Approved by the County Executive this
29th Day of March 2023.

[s] Jen Metzger
Jen Metzger, County Executive