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ORDER ON NUECES COUNTY PLAN TO ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE UNDER TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE §539.0051

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, the goals of Texas Government Code §539.002 are to establish or expand community collaboratives that bring the public and private sectors together to provide services to persons experiencing homelessness, substance abuse issues, or mental illness;

WHEREAS, to the extent funds are appropriated, the Department of State Health Services shall make grants to entities, including local governmental entities, nonprofit community organizations, and faith-based community organizations, to establish or expand a community collaborative under Texas Government Code §539.002; and

WHEREAS, Texas Government Code §539.0051 requires the governing body of a county to develop and make public a plan detailing:

- how local mental health authorities, municipalities, local law enforcement agencies, and other community stakeholders in the county could coordinate to establish or expand a community collaborative to accomplish the goals of Government Code §539.002;
- how entities in the county may leverage funding from private sources to accomplish the goals of Government Code §539.002 through the formation or expansion of a community collaborative; and
- how the formation or expansion of a community collaborative could establish or support resources or services to help local law enforcement agencies to divert persons who have been arrested to appropriate mental health care or substance abuse treatment:

NOW, THEREFORE THE NUECES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT DOES HEREBY ADOPT, AND MAKE PUBLIC, THE FOLLOWING PLAN:

I.

“How local mental health authorities, municipalities, local law enforcement agencies, and other community stakeholders in Nueces County could coordinate to establish a community collaborative to accomplish the goals of Government Code §539.002.”

Amongst others, the Behavioral Health Center of Nueces County, the Nueces County Sheriff's Office, the several Nueces County constables' offices, the Corpus Christi Police Department, the Nueces County Community Supervisions and Corrections Department, the several Nueces County criminal trial court judges, the Nueces County District Attorney's Office, the local criminal defense bar, and various local nonprofit and faith-based community organizations could coordinate to provide services to persons experiencing homelessness, substance abuse issues, or mental illness by continuing to implement and strengthen existing collaborative efforts. Current collaborative efforts include an existing jail diversion program which serves to identify and divert individuals with misdemeanor offenses out of the judicial system and into services with the Behavioral Health Center in order to address the underlying mental health issue. These entities will continue to collaborate to strengthen programs and processes with additional participation and diversion of non-violent offenders and by examining opportunities to divert prior to misdemeanor offenders entering the court system. In addition to Jail Diversion, Behavioral Health Center of Nueces County operates an outpatient competency restoration program in collaboration with local courts, and the district attorney's office. Individuals served in this program are identified and engaged into outpatient competency services rather than being remanded to a forensic bed in the state

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hospital system. This program is highly effective at diverting forensic commitments to the least restrictive care setting but it has a direct impact on the availability of state hospital beds for those that need it most. Ongoing collaboration and coordination between the Behavioral Health Center and the court system is critical to ensuring ongoing success. Nueces County Courts, the jail, and Behavioral Health Center will continue to collaborate through monthly jail population meetings and jail diversion meetings. During these meetings, individuals with behavioral health needs are identified and discussed for inclusion into diversionary programming such as outpatient competency restoration and the Behavioral Health Center's jail diversion program. These meetings are attended by local judges, the Sheriff's office, the district attorney's office, jail staff, county leadership, and other Local Mental Health Authority representatives, among others. The Behavioral Health Center also participates in the Community Resource Coordination Group, Coastal Bend Social Service Coalition, and Coastal Bend Coordinated Community Response Coalition. These meetings have representation for DFPS, the women's shelter, BHCNC, among many other local services agencies and law enforcement.

II.

“How entities in Nueces County may leverage funding from private sources to accomplish the goals of Government Code §539.002 through the formation of a community collaborative.”

Through the formation of a community collaborative under Government Code §539.0051, the various Nueces County entities may leverage funding from private sources to provide services to persons experiencing homelessness, substance abuse issues, or mental illness by applying for additional grant funding in partnership with BHCNC and other community partners as new opportunities arise to expand existing partnerships and increase services to individuals experiencing homelessness, substance abuse and mental health issues. Inter-local planning and collaboration between community partners can serve to bridge the gap in services and provide interdisciplinary care to those in need. The collaborative could jointly pursue funding opportunities as they arise to develop new partnerships in service delivery providing an interdisciplinary continuum of care for Nueces County which reaches beyond what is currently in place.

III.

“How the formation or expansion of a community collaborative could establish or support resources or services to help local law enforcement agencies to divert persons who have been arrested to appropriate mental health care or substance abuse treatment.”

Through the formation of a community collaborative under Government Code §539.0051, the various Nueces County entities will establish or support resources or services to help local law enforcement agencies to divert arrested persons to appropriate mental health care or substance abuse treatment by more rapidly identifying and linking individuals with mental health and substance use issues to services through the collaborative. In addition to Jail Diversion programming and Outpatient Competency Restoration, opportunity exists to expand and strengthen diversionary programming not only with the Behavioral Health Center but also with other local community agencies. The Behavioral Health Center and Corpus Christi Police Department have begun and will continue to take proactive measures in ensuring those with mental health needs are identified prior to committing an offense. There are processes by which CCPD supervisors can contact the Behavioral Health Center directly to request outreach and follow up immediately following the identification of individuals with mental health needs by local officers on the street. This early detection, communication, and intervention serves to engage individuals in treatment before their illness leads to the commission of a crime. This process is a compliment to the existing Mobile Crisis Outreach Team's rapid deployment, assessment, and intervention for individuals who are suicidal, homicidal or extremely psychotic. Continuing to expand, strengthen, and evolve existing collaborative efforts across community agencies, law enforcement, judicial systems, and county operations allows the resources of Nueces County to bridge gaps in care which those most in need are likely to fall in to.

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DULY ADOPTED BY VOTE OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF NUECES COUNTY, TEXAS
ON THIS THE ___ DAY OF _____, 20__.

SAMUEL L. NEAL, JR.,
Nueces County Judge

MIKE PUSLEY
Commissioner, Precinct 1

JOE A. GONZALEZ
Commissioner, Precinct 2

JOHN MAREZ
Commissioner, Precinct 3

BRENT CHESNEY
Commissioner, Precinct 4

ATTEST: _____
KARA SANDS, County Clerk