November 8, 2017

Memorandum To: Members of the Stepping Up Ohio Statewide Steering Committee
County Coordinators for Stepping Up Ohio

From: Tracy J. Plouck, Director

Subject: Working definition of serious mental illness

A key objective of Stepping Up Ohio is to improve access to clear and consistent data between county jails and the local behavioral health system. Shared definitions are imperative to this objective. As you are aware, there are often inconsistencies in how people define "serious mental illness," and communities participating in Stepping Up Ohio have requested guidance from the state to achieve consistency, both between local partners and across jurisdictions.

The definition below has been developed based on discussion at our last few statewide steering committee meetings. Henceforth, as we provide technical assistance on Stepping Up Ohio data-related matters, we will use this definition. Please encourage partners within your counties and networks to voluntarily adopt its use.

**Serious Mental Illness definition for use in jails:**
A mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder of an individual age 18 or older (excluding developmental, neurocognitive, and substance use disorders) that is currently diagnosable or has been diagnosed in the past year, of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified within the most current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and resulting in serious functional impairment which interferes with one or more major life activities. Such disorders would include but not be limited to:

- Schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders;
- Bipolar disorders;
- Major depressive disorders of at least moderate severity or with psychotic features;
- Obsessive-compulsive disorders;
- Panic disorder; or
- Post-traumatic stress disorder.

These conditions may exist with co-occurring developmental, neurocognitive and/or substance use disorders.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improve outcomes for individuals with mental illness who are justice involved. If you have questions regarding this definition or any other matter related to Stepping Up Ohio, please feel free to contact me.