## STEPPING UP & TAKING ACTION

### THE MISSION

The mission of both the national and Ohio's Stepping Up Initiative is to help criminal offenders with mental illnesses get connected to clinical treatment and other services so they can get well, make positive life changes, and stay out of jail.

Directed by Ohio Supreme Court Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton (ret.) and Project Manager Melissa Knopp, Esq., along with other state and county leaders, Stepping Up Ohio is supported by the CSG Justice Center and is generously funded by Peg's Foundation.

> "The increased involvement of people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders in the criminal justice system is a serious problem.
>
> By connecting individuals with clinical treatment and pre-release care coordination services, they are more likely to get well and make positive life changes."
>
> **– Lori Criss, Director**
> Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

### TAKING ACTION

#### WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

**2 MILLION** people with serious mental illnesses are admitted to U.S. jails each year

And almost three-quarters of incarcerated adults with serious mental illnesses have co-occurring substance use disorders. Jails have become de facto inpatient psychiatric facilities across the nation.

Ohio is no exception, either, with 30 percent or more of our incarcerated population having mental illnesses. Incarceration takes its toll on everyone: individuals, families, and even taxpayers. It's more expensive to jail persons with mental illnesses than it is to provide community mental health services. It's also in the interest of personal and public safety to help those who need mental health services get the treatment they need.

Stepping Up Ohio is an adjunct of the national Stepping Up Initiative launched in 2015 by the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, the National Association of Counties, and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, with support from the U.S. Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Assistance.

### THE OHIO PROJECT

We're already making strides in reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in our jails, thanks to the many Ohio counties that have committed to the Stepping Up Ohio initiative. Reform is coming and it will look something like this:

- Validated screening and assessment tools
- Diversion programs instead of jail time for those with mental illnesses charged with low-level crimes
- Embedded mental health professionals to help ensure that people with mental illnesses are connect to community-based services
- Specialized courts that meet the unique needs of defendants with mental illnesses
- Training and response programs to improve law enforcement's response to the needs of people with mental illnesses
- Technical assistance and resources for housing needs

# THE STEPPINGUP INITIATIVE

THE OHIO PROJECT

## 5 WAYS OHIO CAN HELP COUNTIES 'STEP UP'

**1** Join the growing list of supporters.

Become a Stepping Up Ohio registered county by passing a resolution in support of the initiative.

▶ www.stepuptogether.org/take-action

**2** Access the Stepping Up Toolkit.

Once you've become a supporter, you'll get a link to the toolkit. Make sure you follow the link for planning guides, webinars, educational handouts, publications, and more.

**3** Request a visit from the Stepping Up Ohio team.

Our team will come to you, bringing with it resources, polices, and best practices to share. We'll also help you set and prioritize your next steps.

▶ To schedule a visit, email **knoppm@steppingohio.org**.

**4** Get access to resources to help with your county plan.

As a Stepping Up Ohio participant, you also get access to a variety of technical resources, such as learning opportunities, peer exchanges, and a newsletter containing important grant and training information and conferences of interest.

▶ For details, email **kathy.yokum@mha.ohio.gov**.

**5** Map your county's resources and needs.

See Infographic 14 (Sequential Intercept Mapping) to participate in this valuable two-day program offered only to Stepping Up Ohio counties.

## READY TO STEP UP OHIO?

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