

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to behavioral health; creating the
 3 Behavioral Health Community Solutions Pilot Program in
 4 Polk County; providing purposes for the program; providing
 5 for cooperative efforts; creating the Behavioral Health
 6 Forensic Project for the Tenth Judicial Circuit; providing
 7 goals; expanding the current crisis response team;
 8 creating three forensic teams; expanding the mental health
 9 court; providing for a step-down residential facility;
 10 providing for a central receiving facility; providing an
 11 effective date.

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 13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 15 Section 1. Behavioral Health Community Solutions Pilot
 16 Program; creation; purpose; membership.--

17 (1) There is created the Behavioral Health Community
 18 Solutions Pilot Program in Polk County. The purposes of the
 19 program are to identify gaps in service in relation to
 20 behavioral health issues in the criminal justice system and to
 21 design a comprehensive system to mitigate problems.

22 (2) The pilot program shall consist of the cooperative
 23 efforts of the Polk County Sheriff's Office and the Peace River
 24 Center.

25 (3) The Behavioral Health Community Solutions Pilot
 26 Program is created in the Tenth Judicial Circuit.

27 Section 2. Behavioral Health Forensic Project for the
 28 Tenth Judicial Circuit; creation; goals.--

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29 (1) There is created a Behavioral Health Forensic Project
30 for the Tenth Judicial Circuit. The purpose of the project is to
31 divert people from the community jails and criminal justice
32 system who would benefit from other available community services
33 and treatments. The following changes shall be implemented to
34 assist in the success of this project:

35 (2) Expansion of the crisis response team:

36 (a) Twenty new members of the crisis response team shall
37 be hired to cover the three counties in the Tenth Judicial
38 Circuit of Florida. Team members shall be located in the sheriff
39 department's substations, allowing the team members to work
40 closely in collaboration with each of the three county sheriff's
41 departments.

42 (b) The purpose of the team is to provide local law
43 enforcement officers with 24-hour support to help prevent arrest
44 by:

45 1. Assisting law enforcement officers in the field with
46 calls pertaining to behavioral health issues.

47 2. Assisting law enforcement with assessing and
48 determining if issues involving mental health or substance abuse
49 exist, such as those necessitating the use of the Baker Act or
50 substance abuse detoxification programs, and by accessing
51 immediate resources.

52 3. Supporting law enforcement officers by providing the
53 followup contact, communication, and monitoring of previous
54 crisis call-outs, thereby preventing recurrences of individual
55 crisis situations.

56 (3) Creation of three forensic teams:

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57 (a) There shall be three forensic teams, each consisting
58 of seven people. Six of the people on the team shall be
59 qualified in mental health or co-occurring services and trained
60 in forensic evaluations. One person shall have training and
61 experience from the criminal justice system and shall serve as
62 the liaison from the criminal justice system to the team.

63 (b) Each team shall be located in community behavioral
64 health offices in close proximity to each of the three counties'
65 judicial or correctional facilities.

66 (c) The purpose of each forensic team is to reduce the
67 amount of time people suffering from mental illness or co-
68 occurring issues spend in county jails and the criminal justice
69 system.

70 (4) Expansion of the mental health court:

71 (a) The current criminal judicial system within the Tenth
72 Judicial Circuit shall be expanded to provide for the specific
73 recognition of judicial cases that are complicated by behavioral
74 health issues, especially misdemeanor cases. Funding of the
75 previously identified forensic teams shall provide for the case
76 management of behavioral health cases involving misdemeanor
77 charges.

78 (b) Attention to the mental health cases shall decrease
79 the amount of time people with behavioral health issues spend in
80 county jails and the criminal justice system.

81 (5) Conversion of an existing facility into a step-down
82 residential facility:

83 (a) The Peace River Center has an existing facility in
84 Lakeland that shall be converted into an eight-bed step-down

85 residential facility for individuals released from the state
86 forensic facilities. Funds shall be allocated to provide for the
87 daily food, shelter, activity, programming, and increased
88 supervision and monitoring of people residing in this unlocked
89 community facility.

90 (b) The purpose of this step-down residential facility is
91 to increase the number of individuals that would be discharged
92 from the state forensic hospitals in areas that lack community
93 housing resources.

94 (6) Conversion of an existing facility into a central
95 receiving facility:

96 (a) The Peace River Center shall provide a facility that
97 may be converted into a central receiving facility. This
98 facility shall be at a location in which people are assessed and
99 either transferred to the most appropriate stabilization or
100 detoxification inpatient facility or connected and referred to
101 outpatient community resources. This central receiving facility
102 shall be similar to the Orange County Central Receiving
103 Facility.

104 (b) The facility shall be located in the area that has the
105 highest volume of cases handled under the Baker Act, with
106 satellite offices located in other areas of the Tenth Judicial
107 Circuit.

108 (c) A collaborative group shall be responsible for
109 developing a system of transportation between participating
110 facilities and agencies.

111 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.