

By Senator Dockery

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to behavioral health; creating the Behavioral Health Community Solutions Pilot Program in Polk County; providing purposes for the program; providing for cooperative efforts; creating the Behavioral Health Forensic Project for the Tenth Judicial Circuit; providing goals; expanding the current crisis response team; creating three forensic teams; expanding the mental health court; providing for a step-down residential facility; providing for a central receiving facility; providing an effective date.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 (2) Expansion of the crisis response team:

8 (a) Twenty new members of the crisis response team
9 shall be hired to cover the three counties in the Tenth
10 Judicial Circuit of Florida. Team members shall be located in
11 the sheriff department's substations, allowing the team
12 members to work closely in collaboration with each of the
13 three county sheriff's departments.

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

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

19 2. Assisting law enforcement with assessing and
20 determining if issues involving mental health or substance
21 abuse exist, such as those necessitating the use of the Baker
22 Act or substance abuse detoxification programs, and by
23 accessing immediate resources.

24 3. Supporting law enforcement officers by providing
25 the follow-up contact, communication, and monitoring of
26 previous crisis call-outs, thereby preventing recurrences of
27 individual crisis situations.

28 (3) Creation of three forensic teams:

29 (a) There shall be three forensic teams, each
30 consisting of seven people. Six of the people on the team
31 shall be qualified in mental health or co-occurring services

1 and trained in forensic evaluations. One person shall have
2 training and experience from the criminal justice system and
3 shall serve as the liaison from the criminal justice system to
4 the team.

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

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

12 (4) Expansion of the mental health court:

13 (a) The current criminal judicial system within the
14 Tenth Judicial Circuit shall be expanded to provide for the
15 specific recognition of judicial cases that are complicated by
16 behavioral health issues, especially misdemeanor cases.
17 Funding of the previously identified forensic teams shall
18 provide for the case management of behavioral health cases
19 involving misdemeanor charges.

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

23 (5) Conversion of an existing facility into a
24 step-down residential facility:

25 (a) The Peace River Center has an existing facility in
26 Lakeland that shall be converted into an eight-bed step-down
27 residential facility for individuals released from the state
28 forensic facilities. Funds shall be allocated to provide for
29 the daily food, shelter, activity, programming, and increased
30 supervision and monitoring of people residing in this unlocked
31 community facility.

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

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

7 (a) The Peace River Center shall provide a facility
8 that may be converted into a central receiving facility. This
9 facility shall be at a location in which people are assessed
10 and either transferred to the most appropriate stabilization
11 or detoxification inpatient facility or connected and referred
12 to outpatient community resources. This central receiving
13 facility shall be similar to the Orange County Central
14 Receiving Facility.

15 (b) The facility shall be located in the area that has
16 the highest volume of cases handled under the Baker Act, with
17 satellite offices located in other areas of the Tenth Judicial
18 Circuit.

19 (c) A collaborative group shall be responsible for
20 developing a system of transportation between participating
21 facilities and agencies.

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

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25 SENATE SUMMARY

26 Creates the Behavioral Health Community Solutions Pilot
27 Program in Polk County. Provides purposes of the program.
28 Provides for cooperative efforts. Creates the Behavioral
29 Health Forensic Project for the Tenth Judicial Circuit.
30 Provides goals for the project. Expands the current
31 crisis response team. Creates three forensic teams.
 Expands the mental health court. Provides for a step-down
 residential facility. Provides for a central receiving
 facility.