

Today's weather

HIGH: 84
LOW: 64
Sunrise: 6:11
Sunset: 8:56

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MEDINA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Resolution on 'Stepping Up' initiative passes

Sara Crawford
The Gazette

MEDINA — The Medina County commissioners passed a resolution Tuesday in support of the Stepping Up initiative, which focuses on reducing the number of people with mental illness in jail.

Stepping Up is a nationwide initiative created by the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, encouraging communities to take part in the initiative's mission.

The Medina County commissioners' resolution states that the prevalence rates of serious mental illnesses in jails are three to six times higher than the general population and that adults with mental illness tend to stay longer in jail, along with a higher risk of recidivism, than those without mental illness.

"The Medina County commissioners do hereby recognize that the Medina County

Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Board sign on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our county jail, commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in our state and across the county to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees and residents to participate in Stepping Up," Medina County Commissioner Aaron Harrison said, reading the passed resolution.

With the Call to Action, the county commissioners resolved to utilize the resources available through Stepping Up for the reduction of people with mental illness in jail, like the creation of a diverse team of leaders from different agencies, the collection and review of prevalent numbers and assess individuals' needs to better identify adults entering jails with mental illnesses and more.

See **INITIATIVE**, A2

INITIATIVE

From A1

“The good news is, this is really the final piece,” Medina County ADAMH Board Executive Director Phillip Titterington said. “Over the last decade through partnerships (and) collaborations, we’ve met or exceeded all of the requirements for this program.”

Alternative Paths was funded to go into the Medina County Jail to provide treatment services and assess-

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Medina County ADAMH Board Executive Director Phillip Titterington

ments to the inmates as they are admitted, Titterington said. Recently, Hope Recovery Community partnered with the ADAMH Board to add recovery support peers within the jail as well.

Titterington said that there are diversion programs offered, specialized dockets through the Common Pleas

Court, and for over 10 years, county law enforcement officers have gone through crisis intervention training through the ADAMH Board, the Medina County Sheriff’s Office and Alternative Paths.

“When they go out in the community on a crisis call, if you will, they know and they’re better equipped to

handle it,” Titterington said. “As opposed to just the old days of ‘Hey, we can’t handle it, let’s put them in jail and then we can assess that later.’”

With the passed resolution, Titterington said that it will formalize the county’s part in the Stepping Up initiative.

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