

‘Man therapy’ addresses elderly depression, suicide

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

The last thing Ada County, Idaho Coroner Dotti Owens expected to do while researching support groups aimed at reducing suicides was laugh. But that’s what she did when she watched a video to learn more about a strategy aimed toward middle-aged men.

A mustachioed gent draws in users with exaggerated caricatures of masculinity, frank questions about what gets men angry, how much they are sleeping, how much they are eating and bluntly, if they have had suicidal thoughts.

“Did you know that men have feelings, too? No, not just the hippies,” says the actor playing “Dr. Rich Mahogany” in one of “Man Therapy’s” videos. He’s part Ron Burgundy from “Anchorman,” part Ron Swanson from “Parks and Recreation,” and he’s trying to help middle-aged men get comfortable talking about what’s bothering them. And accepting help.

“I watch over suicides... like a hawk,” Owens said. “I started seeing this trend where we had 95 suicides just in my country, and 60 percent of them are over 50 years old, and they’re men. I started seeing it climbing.

Now, 80 percent of my 125 suicides in a year are middle-aged White men.”

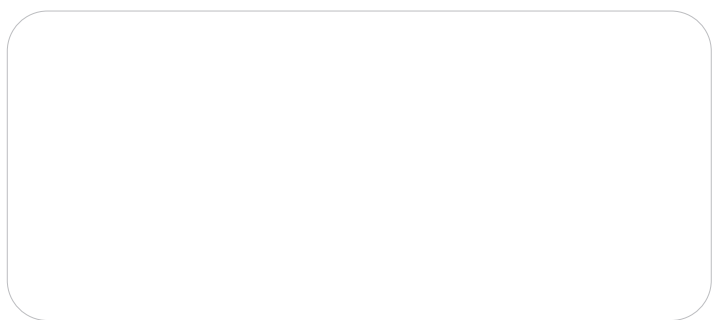
She looked into the backgrounds of the men who had died — what were their relationship or financial situations? Where were the triggers on all of this? What happened to lead to this?

“What we’ve started noticing in doing that, in going back through years’ worth of cases, was that it was the same thing — men don’t want to ask for help,” Owens said. “They don’t want to say, I’m in trouble, I need a support system. We all know that. They don’t. And I feel like, this could be really bad for me, if I don’t ask and reach out. Well, there’s that reluctance to ask and reach out.”

She learned about Man Therapy through the American Association of Suicidology and started incorporating its tenets in 2021. The Man Therapy campaign started in 2012 as part of a public-private partnership anchored by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s Prevention office.

“It is such a different take on suicide prevention in this demographic,” she said. “It’s funny. I mean, who would have

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Hikers discover Zion National Park in Washington County, Utah. Photo courtesy of Washington County

by **Stephanie Overman**
freelance writer

The county wanted to attract more tourists. But how could Washington County, Utah, set itself apart from the nearly 30 other U.S. counties with that name?

The solution was to rebrand itself, according to Kevin Lewis, director of what is now the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office.

The new name draws attention to the fact that one of the most popular national parks is

in the county’s backyard. Visitation at Zion National Park has risen to more than 5 million last year from about 2.6 million in 2010.

At the same time, Lewis said,

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Florida counties brace to take on Disney World responsibilities

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

People visit Walt Disney World for a vacation, an opportunity to let someone else take care of them. For more than 50 years, that’s gone for two counties in central Florida, too.

Rather than make numerous requests for a multitude of services that Orange and Osceola counties would ostensibly be providing for the mammoth amusement park and vacation destination, Disney has essentially done the work itself, both taxing itself and provid-

ing road, water, sewer, emergency response services and more through the Reedy Creek Improvement District, all in addition to requisite county taxes. Now, following Gov. Ron DeSantis’ (R) signing of a bill

See **DISNEY** page 2

'If we had to take over the first response and public safety...it would be catastrophic...'

From DISNEY page 1

to eliminate special districts of a certain age like Reedy Creek, those counties are due to take on those responsibilities, along with millions of dollars a year in debt, on June 1, 2023.

The legislation may also affect a handful of other special districts in the state. DeSantis signed the bill days after he added it to the special session.

"If Reedy Creek goes away, the \$105 million it collects to operate services goes away," Orange County Treasurer Scott Randolph tweeted April 20, before DeSantis signed the bill, passed in the Legislature's special session.

"That doesn't just transfer to Orange County because it's an independent taxing district. However, Orange County then inherits all debt and obligations with no extra funds," estimating \$53 million per year in debt obligations, increasing his county's debt obligations by nearly one-third to \$163 mil-



lion per year.

Counties' ability to raise taxes to meet the sudden increase in debt is limited, and Randolph told WKMG-TV a day later that the county would have

to raise its portion of property taxes by 15-20 percent.

"If we had to take over the first response and public safety components for Reedy Creek with no new revenue, that would be catastrophic for our budget in Orange County," Mayor Jerry Demings said April 21.

"It would put an undue burden on the rest of the taxpayers in Orange County to fill that gap."

Reedy Creek occupies approximately 25,000 acres in both Orange and Osceola counties, with the majority of its developed land in Orange County.

The district includes 175 lane miles of roads, 67 miles of waterway and administers aspects of the economic development and tourism, ensuring that Disney World, and not the municipalities it would otherwise occupy, would bear the cost and responsibility of providing government services and also expediting those services.

That has included building

permit review, code enforcement and road maintenance.

Osceola County Government is beginning to analyze the bill's consequences for its operations to understand the impacts in preparation for this going into effect, including evaluating any shifts in cost to Osceola as a result.

"As Disney and Reedy Creek have been self-contained, we are uncertain of what fiscal responsibilities will be encumbered after June 2023," said Osceola County spokeswoman Krystal Diaz.

"Over the many years, Disney has been a strong community partner and we expect that relationship to continue as we work together for a transition plan."

While the legislation is aimed at Disney, analysis by the Florida Association of Counties has found a number of special districts that would be affected by the dissolutions, including Franklin County's Eastpoint Water and Sewer District, the Hamilton County Development Authority, the

Marion County Law Library Independent Special District, the Sunshine Water Control District in Broward County and the Bradford County Development Authority.

Bradford County Manager William Sexton said the county's legislators have assured him the county would be able to reestablish the county's development authority, but he is concerned about continuity of the authority's real estate and cash assets.

"We have several avenues to reconstitute the authority, possibly to the advantage of the county, which won't have so many restrictions that we do with a special authority based on 60-year-old legislation," Sexton said. "We just haven't updated the authority."

"Our concerns right now are making sure the assets stay with the county. We have our I-75 coming down the middle of the county and we're looking to capitalize on it but there are a lot of things the development authority is intricately involved with there." **CN**

SNAP/STATS

**NATIONAL WINE DAY
MAY 25**

STATE	No. OF WINERIES
CALIFORNIA	4,391
OREGON	774
WASHINGTON	772
NEW YORK	395
VIRGINIA	276

Source: USA Wine Ratings

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Leon Lawrence III

ADVERTISING STAFF
Job Market/Classifieds representative
National Accounts representative
Mary Ann Barton
202.942.4223
FAX 866.752.1573

Published by:
National Association of Counties
Research Foundation, Inc.
660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400,
Washington, D.C. 20001
202.393.6226 | FAX 866.752.1573
E-mail cnews@naco.org
Online address www.countynews.org

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Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400, Washington, D.C. 20001.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to County News, 660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400, Washington, D.C. 20001

(USPS 704-620) n (ISSN: 0744-9798)
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Social events aimed at middle-aged men help thwart anger, depression, anxiety

From MAN THERAPY page 1

thought? It's comical."

In addition to a 20-question survey that measures risk factors for anger, depression, anxiety and substance abuse, the website offers regional referrals for support resources. The campaign also puts a focus on the emotional challenges that first responders experience.

Owens has made appearances on local talk radio stations to get the word out.

"There's no way to really track if it was preventative," Owens

said, but she added that the website's hits had increased by nearly 200 percent in the year since she began pushing it.

Many calls made to the regional referrals promoted on the website are "critical callers, meaning they actually ended up being called and referred to our suicide hotline, and hopefully preventative," Owens said.

Owens goes one further, taking male bonding off of the computer and into real life. She hopes to hold some kind of social event aimed at middle-aged men either quarterly

or monthly.

She's worked with a veteran suicide prevention group, One More Day, on joint events that she hopes will help men establish new bonds at a time when many find their social circles shrinking. And it would sidestep the challenge of fighting stigma by cajoling them with something fun and interesting.

"Last June, we had about 250 guys show up to a motorcycle ride," she said.

"We'll try to hold a pool tournament, maybe do something at one of the bowling al-

leys, have one of our sporting goods stores do a fishing day, or something where we can get that demographic together and talking. And that's the whole point of it."

El Paso County, Colo. did a one-year push for Man Therapy starting in 2018. Though it's not part of the county's current promotional efforts, Michelle Beyrle, spokeswoman for the county's public health department, said there was some residual value in having gotten the resources out into the public.

"I do think it's a really great campaign and I thought it was really successful," she said. "I think one of the things that worked very well for our community was looking at these issues — something as complex as suicide — and tackling it from all the different sides. Those strategies are going to differ significantly enough to make that the messaging tactics that we use for a younger group. That's why it was such a cool campaign, because it's so unique, so tailored to that group." **CN**

U.S. tourism industry could reach \$2 trillion, exceeding pre-pandemic levels

From TOURISM page 1

the rebranding helps highlight the many other recreational activities available in the county beyond the national park, helping to spread the tourism wealth around.

Washington County's rebranding campaign began just as the coronavirus pandemic took hold in the United States.

The rebranding effort may have helped the county weather the storm, according to Lewis.

With a more diversified tourism economy, "when the pandemic hit, one market might be down, but another might fill the gaps.

During the pandemic, it dropped, but then it picked up.

Last year we had record-breaking visitation" throughout the county, he said.

The forecast is bright for this year, with the World Travel & Tourism Council Oxford Economics estimating that the U.S. tourism industry could reach \$2 trillion and exceed pre-pandemic levels by 6.2 percent.

Its data suggests U.S. domestic travel spending could reach more than \$1.1 trillion for the year, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 11.3 percent.

One big draw to Washington County for all those tourism dollars is endurance sports.

Last September, the county played host to the 2021 Ironman 70.3 World Championship, one of 12 official Ironman events in the United States. On

May 7, the 2021 Intermountain Healthcare Ironman World Championship was set to take place in the county, having been postponed in Hawaii because of the pandemic.

These Ironman events provide the perfect opportunity to showcase the county's most scenic areas, Lewis noted.

Athletes swim 2.4 miles at Sand Hollow State Park, then bike 112 miles and run 26.2 miles throughout the county.

All the endurance sports and outdoor adventures that Washington County now offers has prompted them to borrow a new spin on neighboring New Mexico's "Land of Enchantment" motto, Lewis added.

"We recently branded ourselves 'the Land of Endur-

ance."

A rebranding effort also is underway in Hunterdon County, N.J.

The goal of the new "Explore Hunterdon: The Other Side of New Jersey" campaign is to distinguish the western county from the state's familiar traffic-clogged turnpike corridor.

"The number one remark we get here is: 'This is New Jersey?'" said Mark Saluk, director of the Hunterdon County Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

"They just don't understand what we have to offer. We have river towns, agritourism, outdoor activities like biking."

The county had planned for some time to launch a rebranding campaign, he said, but the pandemic really drew the value of the area into focus.

"We realized there are a lot of beautiful outdoor areas, it's a safe environment," Saluk noted.

"We want to make sure people realize all that we are when they hear our name." **CN**



Visitors to Sand Hollow in Washington County, Utah take an ATV for a spin in the dunes.

Get involved! A letter from NACo's first vice president

Thank you for your dedication to your county and counties across America through your membership with the National Association of Counties (NACo).

As we emerge from this pandemic, we are revisiting our personal and professional priorities.

While you serve your county in vast ways, I ask you to strongly consider submitting your name for a leadership position at NACo.

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Hon. Denise Winfrey

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- At-Large NACo Board Directors

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Employee health serves as a crucial underpinning

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

When someone is struggling emotionally, a natural reaction is to shut down. And at a time like that, many people find themselves swimming against the current trying to find help. To Kenneth Wilson, the best way to remove the stigma of seeking mental health services during the pandemic was to remove the seeking.

The Franklin County, Ohio administrator suggested making employee assistance programs more accessible during a workshop April 7 on employee wellness during the Healthy Counties Forum in Wake County, N.C.

“In high-stress agencies, we started with a pilot where we brought the resources to the employees, versus them having to call in and go on the website,” he said.

“We did it within our animal shelter because of the effect of having to euthanize pets; in our family services agency, where workers hear a lot of sad stuff, and they have their own life issues that they’re dealing with and coping with. I became extremely frustrated because it felt like I was only referring as-



Kenneth Wilson, Franklin County, Ohio's administrator, speaks about county employee wellness at the Healthy Counties Forum last month in Wake County, N.C. Photo by Hugh Clarke

assistance services when someone was in intervention to keep their employees.”

By changing the county's healthcare cooperative's designation to be a health improvement plan, rather than a health benefits plan, Wilson hoped to make the services more appealing as a preventive measure.

“The culture we want to create is people being proactive in taking care of themselves,” Wilson said.

“We simply say ‘It's OK not to be OK.’ Just as simple as that. People have to become comfortable with being able

to break the stigmas to receive help and attention.”

Franklin County uses a web-based wellness application, CredibleMind, which they make available not just to county employees, but residents, too.

“The barriers to care are not equally distributed, so removing those barriers disproportionately helps those who are in the greatest need,” Wilson said.

Tramaine El-Amin, of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, suggested help for county employees' and residents' mental health was

more accessible than it would appear, thanks to the Mental Health First Aid program and its three-day training certification. NACo has partnered with the council to promote the program.

“We've heard some stories because we've been working with a number of public health officials nationally to support them through some of the turmoil that happened over the course of COVID-19,” she said.

“We've heard the impact and the challenges, the protests, the threats that they've experienced, and did some real support work with them through an initiative we had because we know that it works not just for mental health first aid, but also just supporting county employees to know that they aren't alone, that there's a shared experience and that making sure they take care of themselves is most important.”

The program forms a framework for understanding the signs of mental and emotional distress and how to react.

“A lot of times, we raise awareness but then what? What do we do after we have a sense that something's just not right?” El-Amin asked.

“County employees are the ones who are holding everything together and knowing what to do when no one else knows what to do.”

“I got to see firsthand what it meant to have something that was tangible, easily accessible and the language was relatable enough that we could train our faith communities, we could train our barbers, we could train our community health workers to really deliver mental health education without having to have the background to actually go and sit on somebody's couch and charge billable hours,” she said.

She pointed out that research has shown there is a 10-year gap between the time when someone experiences a mental health challenge and when they receive services and support.

“We want people to stay within their lane, right, but we want people to make sure that they understand what to do

and when,” she said. “But we also want to understand how to support someone either in a crisis situation or non-crisis situation.”

“Every county is unique, so we want to make sure that counties have the ability to train who they need to — whether that's adults or youth or schools — whether that's a ‘train the trainer’ model, where they can train their own instructors so that they can have that sustainability like we did in Philadelphia, or to bring us in to support the workforce themselves and to have that direct training with a workforce focus.

“It's really important that we make sure that we act while we have time. The crisis is worsening and I know you all are aware of that, but it also is worsening for our staff and if we don't take care of our staff, there'll be no one left to help our community.”

When Jennifer Henderson started as treasurer for Schleicher County, Texas, she found a box of fitness trackers in her office and learned she was in charge of the county's wellness program, a responsibility she relished when she found out how robust the program's offerings were.

Working as part of the Texas Association of Counties' Healthy Counties program (unrelated to NACo's Healthy Counties Initiative), the program encourages annual wellness exams and offers a variety of self-management programs, awards free fitness center memberships to all county employees and offers tobacco cessation programs.

But the best benefit, she said, was the incentive to complete a certain number of physical activities every year — full contribution toward their health insurance premiums.

“It encourages participation and healthy kinds of lifestyle choices,” she said.

“We even expanded that coverage — we cover 100 percent of dependent children as well. We can't say that we believe an employee wellness and then see these moms not be able to afford to keep their [children's] doctor.” **CN**

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by Stephenie Overman

Get Ready: OSHA Ramps Up Heat-Related Inspections

Eighteen of the last 19 summers were the hottest on record. Those rising temperatures mean a rising risk of heat-related illnesses and deaths.

The three-year average of workplace deaths caused by heat has doubled since the early 1990s, Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh said in April when announcing a new Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) National Emphasis Program to concentrate on heat-related workplace inspections.

Workers suffer more than 3,500 injuries and illnesses related to heat each year and “extreme heat hazards aren’t limited to outdoor occupations, the seasons or geography,” Walsh said.

“From farm workers in California to construction workers in Texas and warehouse workers in Pennsylvania, heat illness — exacerbated by our climate’s rising temperatures — presents a growing hazard for millions of workers.”

National Emphasis Programs are temporary programs that focus OSHA’s resources on particular hazards and high-hazard industries. This NEP went into effect in April and will remain in effect for three years unless canceled or extended. Long-term, the administration is working to establish a heat illness prevention rule.

Through the new NEP, OSHA will initiate inspections in more than 70 high-risk industries in indoor and outdoor work settings when the National Weather Service has issued a heat warning or advisory for a local area. On days when the heat index is 80 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, OSHA said inspectors “will engage in outreach and technical assistance to help stakeholders keep workers safe on the job. Inspectors will look for and address heat hazards during inspections, regardless of whether the industry is tar-

geted in the NEP.”

Under OSHA law, employers are responsible for providing workplaces free of known safety hazards, including extreme heat. Any employer with workers exposed to high temperatures should establish a complete heat illness prevention program to:

- Provide workers with water, rest and shade.
- Allow new or returning workers to gradually increase workloads and take more frequent breaks as they acclimatize or build a tolerance for working in the heat.
- Plan for emergencies and train workers on prevention.
- Monitor workers for signs of illness.

In Inyo County, Calif., which includes Death Valley — the lowest, hottest and driest portion of the North American continent — Risk Management & Loss Prevention Manager Aaron Holmberg is prepared.

Death Valley is national park land, but Inyo County employees work in areas where “it’s over 100 degrees,” he said. “I’m proud that we’ve never had a heat-related illness or injury.”

California has its own state OSHA program, which meets



or exceeds federal OSHA requirements, Holmberg said. “Fed OSHA is pretty much modeled after what California has done.” Washington and Minnesota also have specific laws governing occupational heat exposure.

“We start training well before it starts getting hot,” he said. “The things we do make a lot of sense — start the day super early and end early or take a long break before the day reaches its peak. Or finish that part of the day indoors.”

He added that he finds CAL OSHA training materials “quite helpful” for outdoor workers because they include lots of simple graphic depictions of heat-related problems and treatment instead of long blocks of words. (See more here: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/HeatIllnessInfo.html>.)

Last fall, OSHA published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to initiate the rulemaking process toward a federal heat standard. The agency planned a public stake-

holder meeting May 3 to discuss ongoing activities to protect workers from heat-related hazards, including its Heat Illness Prevention Campaign, compliance assistance activities and enforcement efforts. **CN**

Stephenie Overman has written extensively about healthcare and wellness for publications including HR Magazine, Employee Benefit News and The Los Angeles Business Journal and is the author of Next-Generation Wellness at Work.

IDENTIFYING, TREATING HEAT DANGERS

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) website warns about the dangers of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatrelillness.html>).

Heat exhaustion is the body’s response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. Not surprisingly, workers most prone to heat exhaustion are those who are elderly, have high blood pressure and those working in a hot environment.

According to NIOSH, symptoms of heat exhaustion include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature and decreased urine output.

NIOSH recommends the following steps to treat a worker with heat exhaustion:

- Take worker to a clinic or emergency room for medical evaluation and treatment.
- If medical care is unavailable, call 911.

- Someone should stay with the worker until help arrives.
- Remove worker from hot area and give liquids to drink.
- Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks.
- Cool the worker with cold compresses or have the worker wash head, face and neck with cold water.
- Encourage frequent sips of cool water.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness, according to NIOSH. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.

Heat stroke occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: The body’s temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. When heat stroke occurs, the body temperature can rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10 to 15 minutes.

Symptoms of heat stroke include: Confusion, altered mental status, slurred speech; loss of consciousness (coma); hot, dry skin or profuse sweating; seizures and very high body temperature.

NIOSH recommends the following steps to treat a worker with heat stroke:

- Call 911 for emergency medical care.
- Stay with worker until emergency medical services arrive.
- Move the worker to a shaded, cool area and remove outer clothing.
- Cool the worker quickly with a cold water or ice bath if possible; wet the skin, place cold wet cloths on skin or soak clothing with cool water.
- Circulate the air around the worker to speed cooling.
- Place cold wet cloths or ice on head, neck, armpits and groin; or soak the clothing with cool water. **CN**

PROFILES IN SERVICE

HELEN STONE

NACo Board Member
Commissioner
Chatham County, Ga.



Stone

Number of years active in NACo: Approximately 16 years.
Years in public service: 17 in elected office; 15 years in volunteer service
Education: Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Georgia.

Occupation: Retired
Hardest thing that I have ever done: Unseat an incumbent and defeat a challenger who was my daughter's boyfriend's mother.

Three people I would love to have for dinner: Katharine Hepburn, Clarence Thomas and Elon Musk.

A dream that I have: For all who are in sickness, despair and need.... to be able to secure the resources that God will provide for them.

You would be surprised to know that: I shoot pheasant, quail and dove with my father's Belgian Browning 20 gauge.

Most adventuresome thing that I have ever done: Sail across the Savannah River from Tybee Island, Ga. to Hilton Head, S.C. and back in a small Hobie Cat with my Golden Retriever and a cooler.

I am most proud of: My family.

Every morning I read: A few pages of whatever book that I am

enjoying.
My favorite meal is: Seared tuna, with fresh vegetables and wild rice.....and Creme brûlée.

My pet peeves are: Mean people and people who take things for granted.

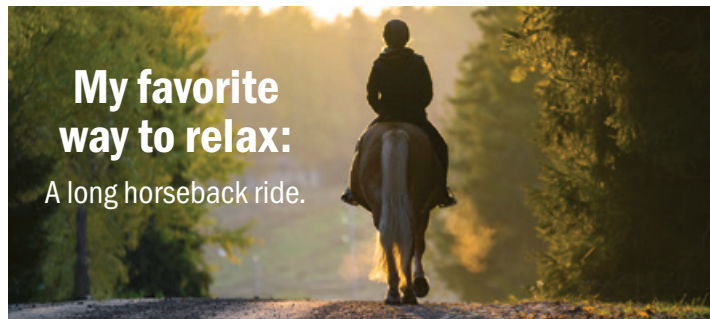
My motto is: Be Good, Do Good.....and Sleep Good.

My favorite movie is: "Seabiscuit."

My favorite music is: Classical and rock.

My favorite president: Ronald Reagan.

My county is a member of NACo because: The training, the opportunity for exchange and the distribution of critical legislative information that NACo provides. In addition, NACo is there to help inform and answer questions that affect the lives of citizens all over the country.



My favorite way to relax:

A long horseback ride.

Proposed amendment to NACo bylaws

ARTICLE IV

Officers

Section 1. Officers.

A. The officers of the association shall be a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President and Immediate Past President.

1. The immediate past president is the most recent past president who is still an elected county official of an active member county.

2. No more than one officer can shall be from a NACo Region.

B. Qualification. The officers of the association shall be elected officials of active member counties.

C. Term. Each officer shall serve a term of office of one year subject to the provisions of Section 3 of this Article.

D. Election.

1. The NACo Region from which the Immediate Past President is from shall nominate candidates for the office of Second Vice President within twelve months of the next annual business meeting.

2. Officers shall be elected by the member counties at the annual business meeting each year.

E. General Duties.

1. They shall be responsible for the property, funds and business affairs of the association in the absence of the board of directors.

2. They shall have and exercise all powers and authority granted by the board of directors.

3. The officers shall make a report to the board of directors at each meeting of the board with respect to the general state of the association, significant changes in the financial condition of the association, and actions taken in the interim period between board meetings.

¹The original proposed amendment was changed from "can" to "shall" for consistency with the NACo Bylaws style.



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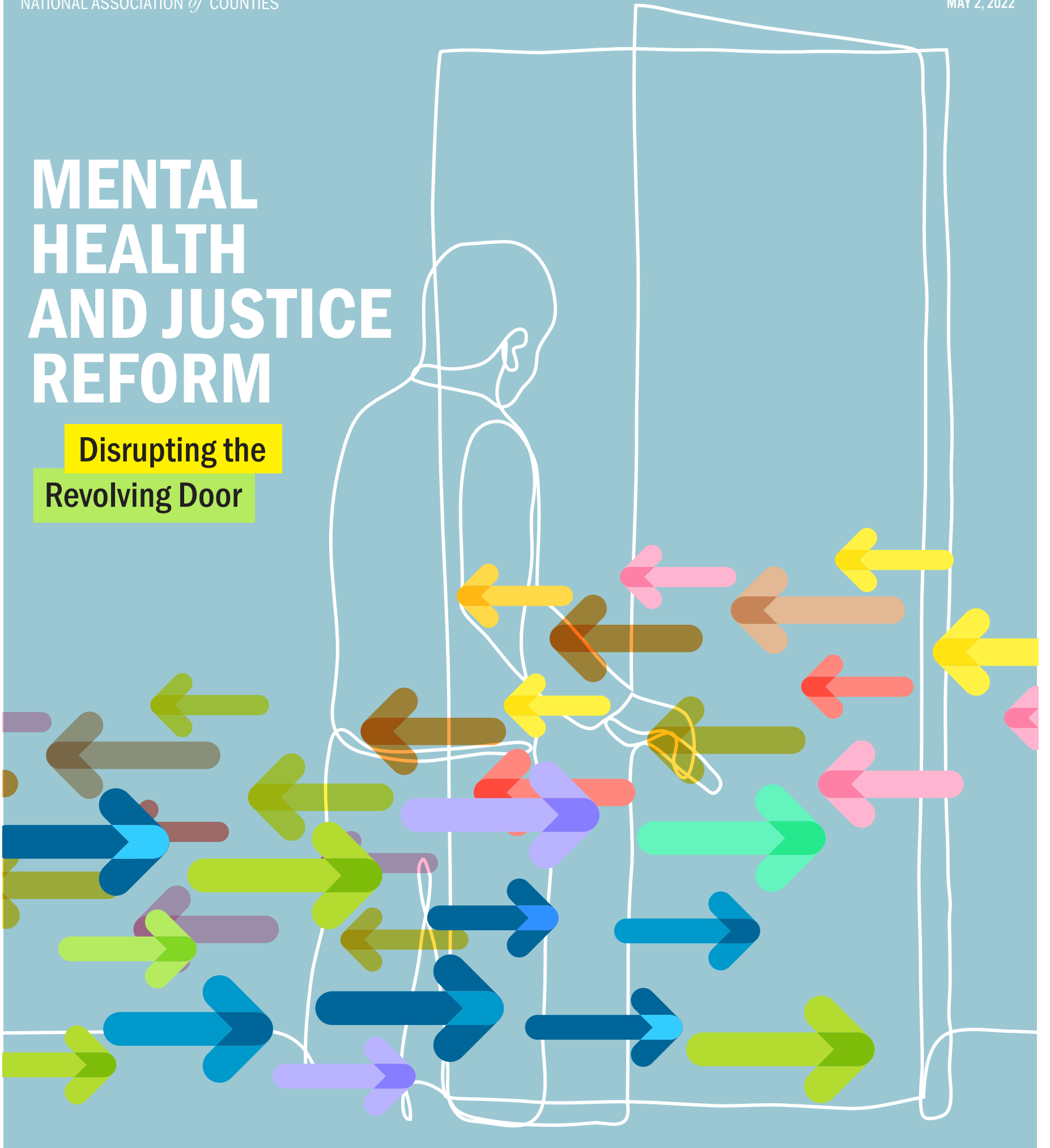
HOT topics

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

MAY 2, 2022

MENTAL HEALTH AND JUSTICE REFORM

Disrupting the Revolving Door



County aims to sharpen justice data tools through new initiative

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

In justice policy, data is currency. Or perhaps more accurately, data is the cotton and linen that money is printed on. Using it gives it value.

Albemarle County, Va., along with the city of Charlottesville, is one of 10 counties selected for the Convening County, Court and Justice Leaders initiative. Those counties will receive ongoing technical assistance and establish a peer network. Their results will also be featured in a national toolkit. And Neal Goodloe is hoping that process will help capitalize on a wealth of data that the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail has collected on incidents of mental illness among users.

“Data is a very powerful tool for making good decisions, [but] data itself doesn’t change anything,” he said. “Our next big steps are to start to understand how we use that to really place some intelligent bets on where we put our resources, where we put our staffing to get the biggest bang for our buck.”

Goodloe is a criminal justice planner for the Jefferson Area Community Criminal Justice Board, which serves Charlottesville and Albemarle and Nelson counties in central Virginia.

“The goal of our NACo work is to help us make some sense of the data that we have, to create consensus around the best use of the (evidence-based decision making) EBDM’s (evidence-based decision-making’s) considerable influence, even though it’s all informal influence. We don’t have any power other than the power of the accumulated knowledge and reputation of the people in the room, but that packs a punch.”

The criminal justice board is hoping to start 2023 with a fully-fledged strategic plan, with focused and targeted goals and action steps.

Over six years, the jail has screened 10,000 people for signs of mental illness and found that approximately one-third met the minimum screening criteria for serious mental illness.

“They tend to stay longer, they tend to return to custody more frequently and they tend to fail while under probation supervision at higher rates than those who do not meet those screening criteria,” Goodloe said.

The University of Virginia’s systems engineering department and Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy have crafted a research design program that



Neal Goodloe, from the Jefferson Area Community Criminal Justice Board, speaks at a lecturn. Photo by Sean Tubbs

would resolve HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) obstacles in the sharing of personally identified information with regard to jail inmates, probationers and consumers of behavioral health services. That allowed researchers to merge these data fields to better understand what percentage of individuals with mental or behavioral illness can be successfully linked to community-based mental health services after their release.

“Without UVA and without the Institutional Review Board protocols that protect the information, it would be unlawful to do it, so what’s important for some of these other counties to understand is if you have a university that will partner with, you can learn things about your system that otherwise would not be lawful to know,” Goodloe said. “Before that, we had no way to really start understanding how all of these pieces fit together.”

In 2019, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and Charlottesville City Council funded a diversion program for low-level defendants, which would ensure them adequate treatment and supervision.

“They knew they would have to face a judge every two weeks, very similar to a drug court model,” Goodloe said. “It’s been an enormous success, but it’s been so successful that we’ve outgrown our funding and we now have more peo-

ple who are being referred and more people who are being considered appropriate for this behavioral health docket.”

The Board received a \$250,000 grant from the Charlottesville area Community Foundation to implement a treatment strategy once people’s mental illness was identified.

“We’d have a conversation, help them understand what their options are both inside the jail and once they’re released to receive help,” Goodloe said. “At least an evaluation of their mental health status, maybe get put on the medication, hopefully get linked up with our local behavioral health agency once they’re released. To try and help them have a successful reentry in the community.”

Soon after, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic limited access to jails in an effort to limit spread, and interaction with service providers was handled remotely.

More of the data the Board has collected indicates a doubling, between 2015-2021, in the number of individuals “screening in.”

“Part of that is the stress of COVID itself,” Goodloe said. “The bad news is that that probably means there are more of them that need mental health care but the good news is it looks like more of them are actually getting it.”

At this point, Goodloe said, “We have 10 years’ worth of data on virtually everything you could possibly want to know. Bookings, average length of stay,

expenditures, by race, by age, by gender, by jurisdiction, by charge time...”

So, now that the raw material is there for insight, Goodloe and his colleagues across the country are aching for help in making something out of it.

“In criminal justice, we are data rich, but we are analysis poor,” he said. “There are people at every single desk, in every probation office, in every jail in every courtroom in the country, just piling data into systems as we speak.”

One impediment to doing more with that data, he said, is the fear that it will reflect poorly on the jail system without larger context that is only visible with more data sharing.

“People are afraid — ‘I’ll give you my data, but you might end up, you know, highlighting something that’s bad,’ and that underlies the sense of distrust people have about sharing data. Until we start sharing data and integrating it, everybody is looking through a drinking straw.”

In the end, Goodloe hopes all of that data sharing and analysis will add up to better results for people who generate those numbers.

“Our goal is to identify those people who need help, offer them that help knowing that ultimately they have to make the decision to change their lives,” he said. “I see our role as creating the optimal conditions under which that change might take place.” **H**

MENTAL HEALTH

— BY THE NUMBERS

by Kevin Shrawder

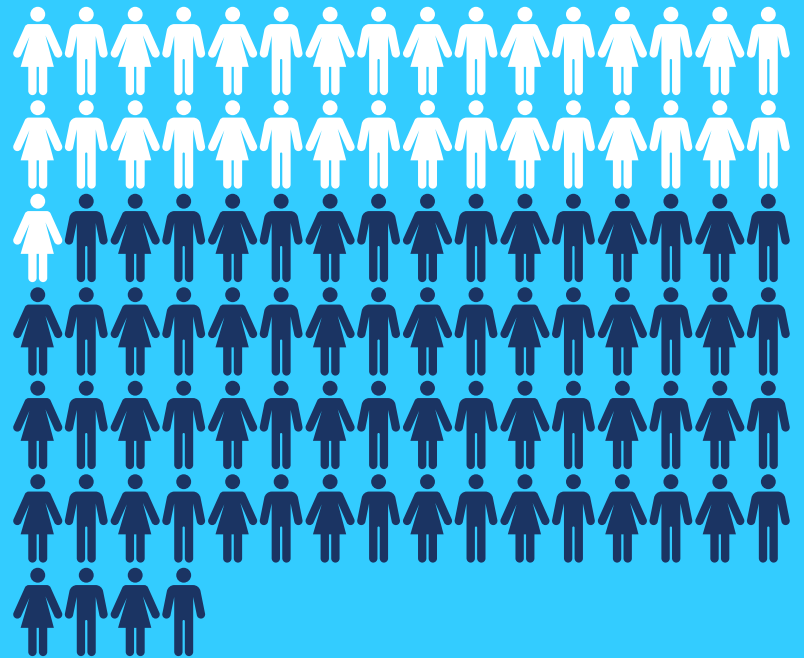
1 In 40 states plus the District of Columbia, **there is at least one mental health facility** operated by a regional/district authority or county, local or municipal government.

Across 48 states plus the District of Columbia, there is at least one mental health facility that accepts county or local government funds as a source of payment for mental health treatment services.

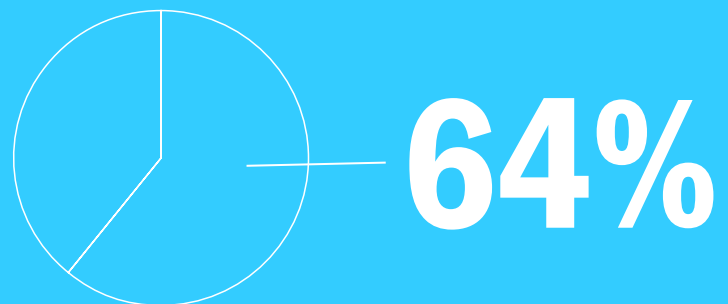
9.5 MILLION

Approximately **9.5 million** adults have both a mental health and substance abuse disorder.

An estimated **2 million** individuals with serious mental health conditions are booked into county jails each year, resulting in prevalence rates of serious mental conditions in jails that are three to six times higher than in the general population.



One-third of the population lives in a county designated as a mental health professional shortage area.



Sixty-four (64) percent of incarcerated people have a mental illness, and the county court system processes over 8 million individuals each year, making county jails one of the largest providers of behavioral and mental health services.

Counties plan and operate community-based services for persons with mental illness and substance use conditions through **750 behavioral health authorities and community providers.**



Improving community health, safety through continuum of care

By Chelsea Thomson

Recognizing that residents living with behavioral health conditions such as mental illness and/or substance use disorder are more likely to succeed when supported by a public health approach in lieu of the criminal legal system, county leaders across the country are spearheading efforts to develop a behavioral health continuum of care.

By directing resources to community-based and “person-centered” services, counties can better serve residents with behavioral health conditions, reduce reliance on the criminal legal system and direct valuable resources toward improving well-being and health.

Annually, counties invest more than \$100 billion in community health systems — including behavioral health support — and provide services through 750 behavioral health authorities and

community providers. Despite this investment, more than half of residents with a behavioral health condition report not receiving treatment within the past 12 months. Communities of color are often less likely to receive treatment because of disproportionately low levels of access to behavioral health care.

To fill this gap, counties are deploying resources that support residents before, during and after a behavioral health emergency by offering someone to call, someone to respond and somewhere to go. This coordinated system deflects and diverts people away from justice-system involvement and emergency room visits through an array of services that assist everyone.

Counties are helping community members before a behavioral health emergency by targeting resources to programs that provide prevention and early intervention services that focus on the environmental

and social conditions impacting community members’ health and wellness.

County programs

In Will County, Ill., the PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) program provides services to residents experiencing housing instability and live with serious mental illness or co-occurring substance misuse. RAIZ Promotores, a mental health prevention and well-being program in

Stanislaus County, Calif., supports the Latinx/Spanish-speaking community. The community health workers live in the neighborhoods they serve and provide a bridge between community members, health care institutions and social service providers. During a behavioral health emergency, community members benefit from having someone to call, someone to respond and somewhere to go to access support, treatment and connections to

services. These practices leverage the experience and expertise of trained clinicians and health professionals to de-escalate a situation without relying on first responders or law enforcement.

Crisis lines provide immediate care for residents during a behavioral health emergency and an entry point to service provision. Clinicians who staff these hotlines can triage the emergency, connect the caller to community-based services and dispatch mobile crisis teams. To assist residents who call 911 for mental health support, counties are virtually or physically embedding clinicians in 911 call centers to de-escalate the call and determine next steps.

Baltimore County, Md., Taylor County, Texas and Durham County, N.C. are among the many counties who have undertaken this practice. Similarly, counties such as Niagara County, N.Y. and Multnomah County, Ore. often offer non-911



Angela Anderson looks at artwork she helped paint on one of the windows of the Second Step Clubhouse in Blue Earth County, Minn. She's seen mental health resources grow in the Mankato area since she first sought help for herself, but people in her shoes still face barriers to getting mental health services in a timely manner. Photo by Pat Christman/The Free Press

networks, withdrawal management, medication adjustment, counseling, therapy and/or longer-term residential care.

Many centers offer a dedicated first responder drop-off area and accept referrals and walk-ins. Leaders in Bell County, Texas and Rowan County, N.C. are exploring the possibility of constructing centers in their counties, potentially leveraging ARPA funding.

Other counties such as Douglas County, Kan., Washington County, Utah and Beltrami County, Minn. recently broke ground on crisis centers or are preparing to open their doors. In some communities such as Pima County, Ariz., Santa Fe County, N.M. and Larimer County, Colo., voters acknowledge the need for these spaces and approved funding via taxes and bonds.

After a behavioral health emergency, community members are more likely to succeed in recovery when they have access to ongoing support and case management to help effectively respond to their underlying needs and future crises. Counties support residents during this time through programs offering peer support, connections to services and continued care. Community engagement teams in Bernalillo County, N.M. employ a recovery-focused approach to promote wellness after a crisis with the support of behavioral health peers. In Blue Earth County, Minn., the Second Step Clubhouse offers a recovery-focused, safe and stigma-free space for residents with serious and persistent mental illness to develop skills and engage in employment, education and community opportunities.

Counties play a pivotal role in improving community members' health, safety and well-being. Developing a coordinated and collaborative system that integrates the elements of the behavioral health continuum of care can enhance these efforts. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but county leaders can best help residents by supporting them throughout the life-cycle of their behavioral health condition as no single piece alone will resolve a problem. **H**

Chelsea Thomson is a justice program manager in the NACo Counties Futures Lab.

room department.

Many counties dispatch law enforcement officers paired with social workers, clinicians and/or paramedics. Worcester County, Md. launched a pilot Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program to embed social workers with first responders and law enforcement. Similar practices pairing behavioral health professionals with law enforcement have been implemented in El Paso County, Colo., Yakima County, Wash., Charlotte County, Fla. and Eau Claire County, Wis. In counties with rural communities, including Dane County, Wis. and Pennington County, S.D., law enforcement officers are equipped with technology such as iPads to increase community members' access to telehealth and telepsychiatry.

Civilian-only teams

Often, calls to 911 are for a mental health crisis or low-level crime, stemming from that emergency or lack of socioeconomic resources. Civilian-only teams may be more appropriate in these cases. These groups can either be dispatched directly from 911 or law enforcement that respond to the call. In Denver and Bernalillo County, Texas, a team pairing a behavioral health clinician and paramedic can respond to crisis calls and provide early intervention. The team in Carroll County, Md. is composed of therapists and peers — individuals who are in recovery.

During a behavioral health emergency, residents may benefit from treatment at a physical location such as federally funded Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics or crisis triage/stabilization centers. While the design and details vary, these centers often provide community members with access to out- and in-patient services, peer support

crisis lines for community members to call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Dutchess County, N.Y. offers the HELPLINE app that can immediately connect users to phone or text support, suicide prevention tools, a resources map and mental health tips.

Starting July 16, 2022, residents in every county will have an easier way to access the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline via 988. This three-digit number will connect callers to trained counselors 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via text, chat or phone. No call goes unanswered and residents who call 988 from communities with behavioral health supports such as mobile crisis teams or crisis centers can receive immediate referrals to services from the 988 counselors.

Mobile Crisis Teams

For residents who may benefit from

in-person support and connections to services, mobile crisis teams (MCTs) offer community-based, face-to-face interventions. MCTs range in composition from crisis-intervention team trained law enforcement officers to civilian-only response, with many featuring teams across professions. They provide stabilization and treatment as well as deflect individuals away from the criminal legal system and emergen-



Charlie Ban
senior writer

Mary Ann Barton
editor

Blaire Bryant
legislative director, Health

CONTRIBUTORS

Leon Lawrence III
design director

Brett Mattson
legislative director,
Justice and Public Safety

Kevin Shrawder
associate economist

Chelsea Thomson
program manager, Justice

Nina Ward
senior program manager,
Behavioral Health

Counties continue efforts to address the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy; eye proposed legislation in Congress

by **Brett Mattson**

In 2019, NACo and the National Sheriffs' Association, in partnership with county officials representing judges, prosecutors, public defenders, behavioral health and veterans services, created a joint task force to explore the impacts of existing federal policies on the recidivism and health outcomes of local jail inmates, with a focus on those individuals suffering from mental health, substance abuse and other chronic health illnesses.

The group surveyed the broad impact of Section 1905(a)(A) of the Social Security Act — referred to as the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) — which prohibits federal funds and services (such as Medicaid, Medicare and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)) from being used to support jail inmate medical care; even if these individuals are normally eligible and enrolled. The group also explored the consequences of the disruption of essential health services upon the release of inmates, including through the termination or suspension of federal benefits.

The task force held multiple convenings over a two-year period and as a result, created an extensive report that in-



cludes an overview of the impact of the MIEP, recommendations for policy makers and outlines best practices for local jurisdictions. Additionally, through the work of the Task Force, key legislation has been introduced in Congress to address the MIEP for individuals in pre-trial status and to ensure access to federal health benefits 30 days before release.

The bipartisan Due Process Continuity of Care Act (S.2697) was introduced last August by Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.). The bill would amend the MIEP to ensure that pre-trial individuals can

retain access to their Medicaid benefits, while also providing \$50 million in planning grants to states and localities to assist in implementation. In the U.S. House, the bipartisan companion legislation (H.R. 6636) was introduced this past February by Reps. David Trone (D-Md.) and Michael Turner (R-Ohio) and currently has 24 cosponsors, including nine Republicans.

While the Due Process Continuity of Care Act would rectify the current lack of access to Medicaid for pre-trial individuals, another piece of legislation has been introduced to provide essential

health care for individuals 30 days prior to their release from local jails. The bipartisan, bicameral Medicaid Reentry Act (S. 285/H.R. 955) was introduced in February of last year and is sponsored in the U.S. Senate by Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.), Mike Braun (R-Ind.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and in the U.S. House by Reps. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) and Michael Turner (R-Ohio).

This bill would allow for Medicaid to cover health services 30 days before an individual is released from a public institution and ensure proper continuity of care for individuals reentering society, thereby decreasing recidivism rates. In June 2021, NACo partnered with 135 national, state and local organizations to send a stakeholder letter to the chairman and ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance expressing our support for the Medicaid Reentry Act and urging the committee to consider and pass the legislation. **ti**

NACo is continuing to work with our congressional champions to advocate for passage of both the Due Process Continuity of Care Act and the Medicaid Reentry Act to protect the local care continuum and strengthen local public health and safety.

RESOURCES FOR JUSTICE REFORM

NACo Data-Driven Justice Relaunch set for May 12

Communities across the country are coming together to better support the needs of their “familiar faces” — individuals with complex health and behavioral health conditions who frequently cycle through jails, homeless shelters, emergency departments and other crisis services.

Sharing data across health and justice sectors to align service delivery enables counties and cities to integrate their systems of care and improve outcomes for high-needs residents. Join NACo and our partners for an import-

ant event to relaunch the Data-Driven Justice initiative as “Familiar Faces” with new tools and learning opportunities to explore how we can better serve familiar faces.

Participants include Margarita Chavez-Sanchez, director, Department of Behavioral Health Services, Bernalillo County, N.M.; Franklin County, Ohio Commissioner Erica Crawley; NACo President Larry Johnson, commissioner, DeKalb County, Ga.; and Yavapai County, Ariz. Sheriff David Rhodes.

Attendees will hear from experts and people directly impacted by

health and justice systems; learn how data-alignment strategies can break the cycle of incarceration and hospitalization and receive information on exciting new opportunities to support local efforts. Data-Driven Justice is supported by Arnold Ventures and led by NACo. Over 150 counties and cities participate in the initiative by developing and implementing cross-system data-sharing efforts.

Register for the webinar here: <https://www.naco.org/events/data-driven-justice-relaunch-improving-outcomes-through-coordinated-health-justice-systems>

Other resources

- Webinar May 11, 2-3 p.m.: Leveraging ARPA Funds to Prevent Violent Crime <https://www.naco.org/events/leveraging-arpa-funds-prevent-violent-crime>
- Community Oriented Policing Services: <https://cops.usdoj.gov/>
- Data-Driven Justice Initiative: <https://www.naco.org/resources/signature-projects/data-driven-justice>
- Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/justice-and-mental-health-collaboration-program-jmhcp/overview>
- JMHCP grants: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/funding>
- Early Serious Mental Illness Treatment Locator: <https://www.samhsa.gov/esmi-treatment-locator>



Chavez-Sanchez



Crawley



Johnson



Rhodes

Envisioning a new way to respond to mental health crises through 988 legislation

by **Blaire Bryant**

Approximately 11 million individuals are admitted into local jails each year, and according to data from the Vera Institute of Justice, nearly half of those individuals will have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. As the number of individuals suffering with behavioral health disorders increases across the nation, so has the reliance on local jails, hospitals and emergency rooms to serve as de facto mental health facilities — with the three-digit dialing code 911 often the primary mode of service connection.

In 2020, Congress unanimously passed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (PL 116-172), which established the three-digit dialing code 988 as a national hotline for the coordination of local mental health crisis services. On July 16 of this year, the 988-dialing code will officially replace the 10-digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline currently in use in communities across the country.

However, beyond the inherent accessibility of a three-digit code, the transition to 988 is just the first step in transforming the way that we respond to behavioral health crises in the United States. The implementation of 988 will require national uniformity in service delivery that connects individuals in crisis to timely and appropriate care, in the most appropriate setting.

The increased accessibility and utilization of the National Suicide Lifeline is expected to produce a greater demand for services that must be met with a well-resourced response system. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) describes this reimagined crisis response system as having three main components:

- Someone to call.
- Someone to respond.
- Somewhere to go.

Incorporated in these three elements are trained crisis call center staff, mobile crisis teams with mental health professionals that co-respond with law enforcement to crisis situations and crisis stabilization programs that allow for a warm hand-off to long term supportive care for the individual.

Building this new robust crisis response system will require sustained investment

at the federal, state and local level. This past February at NACo's Legislative Conference, counties voted on and passed an interim resolution that outlined federal policy priorities for building the local crisis response system, titled "Supporting 988 Implementation and Comprehensive Behavioral Health Crisis Care." The resolution outlines five key areas of investment needed at the federal level, which include:

- Creating a universal standard for behavioral health crisis services for all communities
- Funding local crisis call centers and related behavioral health services
- Establishing a federal Behavioral Health Crisis Coordinating Office
- Authorizing the use Medicaid funding for call center operations and crisis service provision
- Funding the behavioral health work force and related capitol development and improvement projects.

Federal policymakers at both the agency and congressional levels have been responsive to county requests for investments in this space. On April 19, the Biden administration announced it would award approximately \$105 million to 54 states and territories to support crisis call center services, ahead of the July implementation of 988. Alongside this investment, Congress is currently considering a myriad of bipartisan bills that would support the launch of 988 and the development of local crisis response systems. The chart to the right tracks these legislative efforts.

As key administrators of behavioral health services, counties will be a vital force in building a continuum of care for people in crisis around the 988 National Suicide Lifeline. Counties support legislation that ensures that all people have access to comprehensive crisis care services that direct them to the most appropriate treatment options and lead to better health outcomes.

For more information on how your county can prepare to implement 988, see NACo's blog "Someone to Call During a Behavioral Health Emergency: Transition to 988 in Every County." [H](#)

Blaire Bryant is the legislative director for health in NACo's Government Affairs department.

FOCUS AREA	BILL NUMBER/TITLE	SPONSOR	KEY PROVISIONS
Supporting the Full 988/Crisis Response Infrastructure	H.R. 7116 (988 Implementation Act of 2022)	Rep. Cardenas (D-CA); Bipartisan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Funding for hard infrastructure ■ Support for Crisis workforce development ■ Support for access through health insurance (including Medicaid) ■ Technical assistance/public awareness
	H.R. 7232 (988 and Parity Assistance Act of 2022)		All provisions in H.R. 7116 with exception of Medicaid insurance coverage
Support for the 988 Telecom System	S. 1570 (HELP Act of 2021)	Sen. Casey (D-PA); Bipartisan	Allocates fundings to improve 211 and 988 telecommunication systems
Funding Crisis Response Services & Workforce	H.R. 5611/S.1902 Behavioral Health Crisis Services Expansion Act	Rep. Blunt Rochester (D-DE); Bipartisan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establishes minimum requirements for core crisis services ■ Provides coverage for crisis services under all insurers ■ Funds crisis services ■ Establishes coordination council
Raising Public Awareness	S.2425 (Suicide Prevention Lifeline Improvement Act of 2021)	Sen. Reed (D-RI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires SAMHSA to raise awareness about National Suicide Lifeline program and collect related demographic information

Data sharing can keep ‘familiar faces’ from facing jail’s revolving door

by **Nina Ward**

In many counties across the United States, there are a handful of residents who are familiar to many if not all crisis service providers and responders.

In Johnson County, Kansas, one young adult had multiple ambulance service runs, was receiving rental and food pantry assistance, serving probation, booked into the Adult Detention Facility multiple times, was actively receiving outpatient services and had received triage services several times at the community behavioral health facility, all within a 12-month period.

This individual was potentially assigned with six different case managers or clinicians all attempting to provide wraparound services to a clearly high-needs resident. In many communities, these service systems do not have the means to communicate with one another and share this information. Case managers may be unaware of other services being provided and unintentionally leading residents in conflicting or redundant directions.

An uncoordinated approach can be frustrating or overwhelming for individuals already in vulnerable situations and decrease the person’s likelihood of long-term treatment engagement and successful recovery.

In 1999, Johnson County hired a consulting group to look at their human services system and the resulting report painted a clear picture of the number of redundancies and gaps in service provision. Like the young adult interacting with six departments and offices, there were numerous individuals with multiple case managers pointing them in different directions and other individuals who could have benefitted from services but were falling through the cracks.

Familiar faces — individuals with complex behavioral health needs who frequently cycle through jails, emergency rooms, homeless shelters and other crisis services — represent a unique need within the behavioral health continuum, as they touch multiple systems across communities and often require long-term or intensive case management services to ensure treatment engagement and successful outcomes.

NACo’s Data-Driven Justice Initiative supports communities in better aligning resources to improve outcomes for

familiar faces through cross-system data-sharing platforms or strategies that coordinate care from one provider to another with the goal of engaging vulnerable residents in effective treatment and reducing costs to these service systems.

Communities have developed different approaches in order to share sensitive data across systems. In some cases, data-sharing platforms pull limited or “de-identified” data to match individuals across providers so that communities can identify their highest utilizers and build a case management or reentry plan. Another option is to pull all the data to a provider with access to sensitive information, such as a behavioral health service provider. In some communities, individuals are asked to sign a universal release of information so that their data can be shared across systems.

Johnson County, Kan. developed My Resource Connection, a sequel server that pulls data on a view-only basis. The server extracts data each night from diverse data systems throughout the county, matches individuals by name,

date of birth and case manager and provides a report each morning that shows specific services each individual is receiving.

The system also generates an email to case managers to notify them when they have a mutual client with another provider in the county — meaning one of their clients was entered into another data system, for example, the jail management system — enabling the case manager to take quick action in creating a reentry or response plan.

My Resource Connection does not store data, nor does it release any health-related information, such as a diagnosis. It simply matches individuals, generates that information and from there, it is incumbent on the case manager to request additional information (which may require privacy releases) or take further action.

Through cross-system data-alignment strategies that identify who a community’s familiar faces are, the services they need and which service or agency connections need to be forged or strengthened, the DDJ (Data-Driven Justice Initiative) demonstrates how information and data-sharing can break the cycle of costly, frequent incarceration and improve outcomes for familiar faces.

In counties without a behavioral health crisis response system, law enforcement dispatch followed by a jail booking or an emergency department admission is often the de facto response to a crisis

situation. There is consensus that jail is not the appropriate setting to treat mental illness nor is a hospital emergency department an effective, long-term care solution, yet residents experiencing a behavioral health crisis often have nowhere else to go and law enforcement has no other safe response option.

While the mental health needs of residents being booked into jails have been the impetus for many aspects of criminal justice reform, counties are encouraged to engage with DDJ to build out the connections among service providers in their communities, where these needs are most appropriately met. A reduced reliance on law enforcement and jails to meet a community’s mental health needs allows law enforcement to devote more time and resources on public safety needs, also improving overall community wellbeing.

One segment of local government, one department or one agency cannot address all of the needs of familiar faces alone. The DDJ initiative will relaunch May 12 “Familiar Faces” to support communities in coming together to care for their most vulnerable residents. All NACo members are encouraged to attend this virtual event, visit the NACo events calendar on naco.org/events for details and registration information. **ti**

Nina Ward is senior program manager for Behavioral Health in NACo’s Counties Futures Lab.



Rural communities to get help navigating federal resources

by Aaliyah Nedd

The Department of Agriculture’s Rural Partners Network will pair federal agencies with rural communities to provide targeted assistance in navigating federal programs. The pilot program will initially focus on communities across 11 states in a two-phased approach, with more communities to be added later this year.

“Rural America is incredibly diverse — economically, racially, culturally and geographically,” said Secretary



the Greater Grenada, Lake District Partnership Community Network including Grenada and Yalobusha counties, and the North Delta Planning and Development District Community Network, including Coahoma, Quitman and Tunica counties.

New Mexico: Southwest New Mexico Council of Government Community Network including Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties; the Northern New Mexico Pathways Economic Development District Community Network including Mora, San Miguel, Colfax and Taos counties; and the Mesilla Valley Community Network including Doña Ana County.

Rural Partners Network staff assigned to each of these communities will aim to address the community’s specific needs and build on local assets. The staff will also be responsible for providing takeaways to the Rural Prosperity Interagency Policy Council to assist with policy development. **CN**

Aaliyah Nedd is the associate legislative director for NACo’s Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee.

GET TO KNOW... Oneida County, N.Y.

Welcome

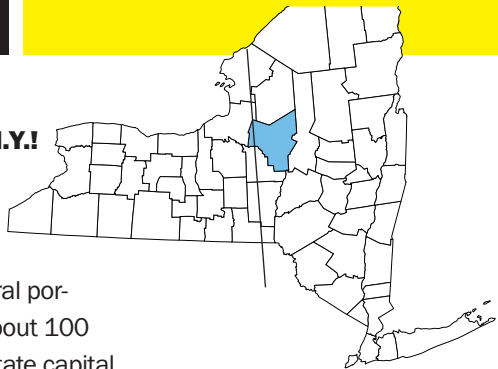
Oneida County, N.Y.!

Founded March 15, 1798, Oneida County, N.Y. is

located in the central portion of the state, about 100 miles west of the state capital of Albany. Bisected by the Erie Canal, the county’s western boundary includes Oneida Lake and Oneida Creek. The county’s total area of land mass is 1,258 square miles (45 miles of that is water).

The county’s name is in honor of the Oneida, an Iroquoian tribe who held the territory at the time Europeans arrived and has a reservation in the region.

With a county population of about 232,000, the largest private employer is the Turning Stone Casino Resort. For many years, the county included the headquarters for Oneida Ltd., manufacturer of silverware, in the town of Sherrill. Today, Sherrill



Manufacturing continues to manufacture silverware in the county, the last remaining flatware manufacturer in the country.

The county seat of Utica is home to the Utica Zoo, which sits on 80 acres with about 100 species and has been in operation since 1914.

The Adirondack Scenic Railroad is a big attraction, taking visitors from central Oneida to the Adirondack Mountains. The country’s largest 15K road race, The Boilermaker, featuring top runners from around the world, is held each year in the county.

“Get to Know” features new NACo member counties.

Tom Vilsack. “What makes sense for one community may not for another. The Rural Partners Network will help communities get funding for investments that create long-lasting benefits for their communities, especially those that have been overlooked in the past.”

The department is spearheading this collaborative effort between 16 federal agencies, local leaders and residents and announced the following counties in the first pilot cohort:

- Georgia: Emanuel County; Ben Hill County and

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Community Network, including Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Seminole, Miller, Mitchell, Terrell, Thomas and Worth counties.

- Kentucky: Fulton County and the Kentucky Highlands Community Network, including Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry and Whitley counties.

- Mississippi: Washington County Economic Alliance Community Network including Bolivar, Leflore, Sunflower and Washington counties;





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JULY 21-24, 2022

Note new pattern: Thursday – Sunday



BRIGHT IDEAS | MORRIS COUNTY, N.J.

County Fights Flooding by Purchasing Properties, Creating More Open Space

PROBLEM: Residents in Morris County, N.J. were experiencing recurrent flooding and first responders were rescuing people from flood-prone properties.

SOLUTION: Purchase land, remove homes and restore properties to open space to better absorb floodwaters and protect other nearby properties from flooding.

by **Stephenie Overman**
freelance writer

Hurricane Irene inundated Morris County, N.J. 11 years ago, leading to record-breaking crests on three main rivers. The county now marks the 10th anniversary of the Flood Mitigation Program it launched to convert vulnerable properties to open space.

The county's "very successful program" has allocated \$9.6 million to obtain 84 flood-prone properties in eight Morris County towns, according to Commissioner Stephen H. Shaw, a member of the Morris County Board of County Commissioners. Shaw is liaison to the Morris County Office of Planning and Preservation, which manages the program.

The county originally considered proposals for costly structures to mitigate flood damage along the Passaic, Pompton and Rockaway rivers, he said. "But this is less costly than a flood tunnel and is more environmentally friendly." The program quickly won two environmental awards from the State of New Jersey for its innovation.

The mitigation program not only directly benefits homeowners who are able to move away from constantly flooded areas, Shaw said. Removing buildings and converting the properties to open space allows the land to better absorb flood waters. "By getting the structures out, it helps people



Flooding in Morris County, N.J. Photo courtesy of Morris County

downstream. The structures were backing water up and making flooding worse."

Heavy rains in early April caused flooding in Morris County, including in Lincoln Park, located next to the banks of the Pompton River, an area that was hard hit by Hurricane Irene.

But since that time, 22 structures have been purchased and removed from the banks of the river, in Lincoln Park, Shaw noted. This time, "22 families are no longer dealing with that" and, with fewer structures underwater, the river waters were more quickly absorbed.

The Flood Mitigation Program operates through the Morris County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust. Using what Shaw called "a sliver of our taxpayer-approved open-space dollars" the board decided to supplement state and federal programs by helping towns obtain flood-prone lots. The county funds go directly to

the municipalities, which purchase the properties from willing sellers and are required to retain the land as public open space.

Towns use the county funds in conjunction with other funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the New Jersey Green Acres/Blue Acres program and, in some cases, municipal contributions.

On average, for every \$1 spent by the county on flood mitigation, there have been \$7 in benefits to the participating towns and county, according to the Office of Planning and Preservation.

The Flood Mitigation Program consists of two basic funding tracks:

- The Match Program offers up to a 25 percent county match to state and federal buy-outs.
- The Core Program is designed to catch homes that have fallen through other agency's funding nets, with Morris County providing up to 75 per-

cent of the acquisition costs.

Grant applications are considered on a rolling basis by the county Flood Mitigation Committee from municipalities on behalf of willing sellers, according to Shaw. Each project is subject to a benefit-cost

analysis based on FEMA computer models. [CN](#)

Stephenie Overman is a D.C.-area writer, the author of "Next-Generation Wellness at Work" and a frequent contributor to County News.

ON THE MOVE

NACo STAFF

- **Maxx Silvan** is now a legislative assistant. He previously served as a membership associate and as a legislative intern while an undergraduate at George Washington University.
- Chief Research Officer **Teryn Zmuda** discussed counties use of Geographic Information Systems in allocating American Rescue Plan investments at ESRI's CIO Summit in San Bernardino County, Calif.
- Membership Director **Kim Hall** attended the Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma Conference in Cleveland County, Okla.



Silvan

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

ALABAMA

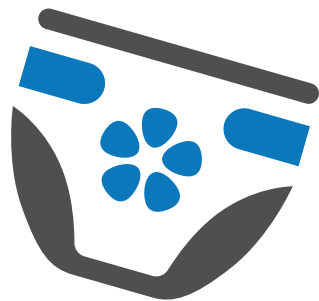
The sheriff's office in **DEKALB COUNTY**'s new "Shining Star" system will maintain a **database of special medical needs** or conditions for first responders to use when answering calls. Registrants will be given an identification card and entered in the database. This aims to provide vital information quickly to those on the scene, to contact next of kin and to quickly decide on the right course of action when helping those patients, particularly those with autism, dementia, Alzheimer's or any mental disorder that can cause altered behavior.

ARIZONA

MARICOPA COUNTY and the City of Surprise are partnering to build a **multigenerational community resource center**. The \$26 million building project will include \$18 million of American Rescue Plan Act funding and will improve resources for families, seniors, young people and vulnerable populations by centralizing and expanding programs and services from several aging city buildings, including the Surprise Resource Center, Hollyhock Library and the Surprise Senior Center.

The new community resource center will allow the county and city to expand

health and wellness, workforce development and housing and homelessness benefit assistance while also offering senior services, library services, veteran services and after-school and summer youth programming.



CALIFORNIA

- **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** will offer **free feminine hygiene products and diapers** under a new pilot program. The items will be available at select county venues such as parks, libraries and museums.

- **MARIN COUNTY**'s Health and Human Services department has launched a six-month pilot program to assign **embedded social workers** to the western communities they serve. A newly hired county resource navigation specialist will work at various towns in the county throughout the week. The program addresses the needs of the large number of residents who are rapidly aging, speak Spanish or suffer from a lack of public transportation, access to food and other



A young Putnam County resident tries out a fire hose, with a little help. Photo courtesy of Putnam County.

GEORGIA

PUTNAM COUNTY celebrated **National County Government Month** with its inaugural "Government Fun Day." The event highlighted effective county programs and raised public awareness about the services provided by the county, offering citizens the opportunity to tour the administration building, meet county employees and elected officials, and learn more about how the county operates.

basic needs, the Marin Independent Journal reported.

FLORIDA

The **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY** Small Business Development Center recently held a **self-employment workshop**, taking aspiring business owners through the ins and outs of running a business. Started to help the unemployed or underemployed by the pandemic, the program teaches participants how to devise a business

plan, how to manage basic accounting and how to develop a marketing strategy.

IOWA

The **JEFFERSON COUNTY** Sheriff's Office is offering **free on-site security surveys**, recommendations and tips to deter theft, advice on making the disposal of stolen goods difficult and expediting the return of property to the rightful owners.

MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS COUNTY voters approved a charter amendment barring the county executive from taking on **part-time work**, with the penalty of forfeiture of office. Current Executive Sam Page had worked part-time as an anesthesiologist, telling St. Louis Public Radio that he did the work on nights and weekends to maintain his medical license and the work

See NEWS FROM page 11



MARYLAND

HOWARD COUNTY's **food scrap recycling program** is expanding to the point where 53 percent of the county's households will be able to divert food waste from their homes. Under the expansion, 5,635 more households will have access to green bins that allow for food scrap collection, bringing the total households served to more than 34,000.



NEVADA

• **CLARK COUNTY**'s Parks and Recreation Department will offer **free swimming lessons** to toddlers thanks to a grant from the Southern Nevada Chapter of the International Code Council.

From NEWS FROM page 10

did not interfere with his official duties.

NEW JERSEY

The **SOMERSET COUNTY** Park Commission will no longer pass out **plastic water bottles** on county golf courses. Each course has been outfitted with filtered water dispensers, encouraging golfers to bring reusable, non-glass bottles and fill up before they head out onto the course.



NEW YORK

• **ERIE COUNTY** and the state of New York reached an agreement for a new \$1.4 billion **stadium for the Buffalo Bills**, along with a 30-year lease on the stadium that begins with the 2026 season. Erie County will contribute \$250 million, alongside \$600 million from the state, to the \$1.4 billion project.

• Active-duty soldiers at Fort Drum may now start **internships** with the **ONEIDA COUNTY** Sheriff's Office two or three months before they are discharged. Sheriff's Of-

fice members hope the interns will eventually choose to work there.

OHIO

• The **FRANKLIN COUNTY** Board of Commissioners approved \$4.5 million for its **Tech Women of Color workforce training initiative**. The initiative is funded by the American Resource Plan Act, in partnership with the county's Department of Job and Family Services and a national tech training nonprofit. The 15-week course will include 200 women of color in cohorts through August 2024, the *Columbus Dispatch* reported. Graduates will receive supportive services as they face the "benefits cliff," which occurs when workers lose public assistance benefits after a small pay increase.



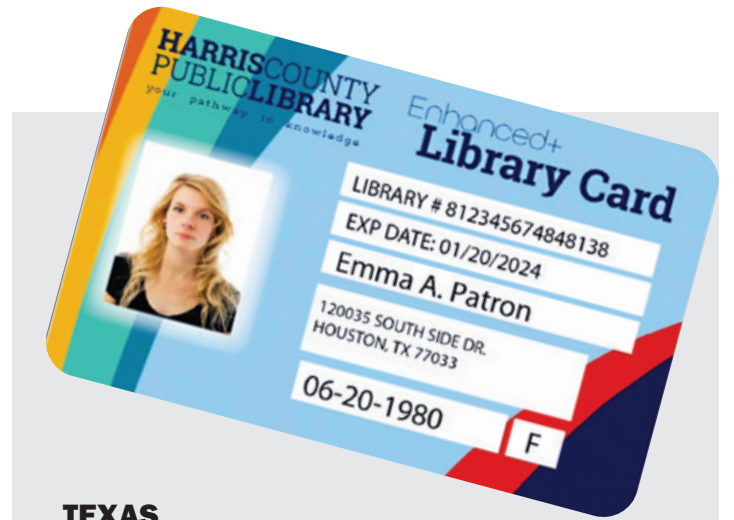
• **MAHONING COUNTY** residents can receive **household appliances** through the Mahoning-Youngstown Community Action Partnership's new Emergency Home

Services Program. Mahoning County Job and Family Services is funding the purchase of stoves, refrigerators, washers, dryers, bedding and cribs. Eligibility depends on income, employment status, the presence of a minor child or a child on the way and U.S. citizenship.

SOUTH CAROLINA

• **DORCHESTER COUNTY** is entering a public-private partnership with Home Telecom and Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative to **expand high-speed internet** access to the western part of the county over the next three years. This \$17.1 million investment is subsidized through matching funds provided by Home Telecom and PRTC along with a maximum grant of \$8.5 million from the American Rescue Plan Act. This partnership will result in 325 miles of buried fiber to more than 4,100 homes that currently do not have access to adequate high-speed internet service.

• **SPARTANBURG COUNTY** is introducing a **Family Court Child Support Bench Warrant Amnesty Program**, the county's first-ever child support amnesty program. Offenders may pay a lump sum of their child support or set up a payment plan and have their warrants forgiven. The county



TEXAS

HARRIS COUNTY libraries are helping distribute Enhanced+ library cards, which can be **used as photo identification** with some agencies, including the Harris County Sheriff's Office and Harris Health. The Texas Organizing Project is hoping to gain more adopters to help county residents who don't have a driver's license or other state-issued documents.

The card is a free photo ID valid for five years with the person's name, address, date of birth and gender and can be acquired regardless of age, immigration status or housing status. Applicants must prove their identity through documentation.

hopes to recall the majority of the 400 outstanding warrants impacting families.

UTAH

The **SALT LAKE COUNTY** Council voted to **prohibit mining and mineral extraction** in the Wasatch Foothills and Canyons Overlay Zone, blocking a proposed limestone quarry.

WASHINGTON

The Washington state Court of Appeals has overturned a superior court's ruling that the members of the **STEVENS COUNTY** Board of Commissioners **should not have been removed from office** in 2020 and held personally responsible for repayment of about \$130,000 in public funds.

A prosecutor pursued their removal after the Washington State Auditor's Office determined that three transfers of money under the county's homeless plan had been unallowable gifts of public funds.

WISCONSIN

MILWAUKEE COUNTY has assembled an **online overdose dashboard** that illustrates trends in fatal and non-fatal overdoses and provides critical data to inform prevention efforts.

The dashboard is a collaboration among the Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County's Office of Emergency Management, Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office, Wisconsin Department of Justice and others.



Photo by Storey County, Nev.

NEVADA

• **STOREY COUNTY** is getting new **sidewalks**, but not entirely new. The county has photographed, indexed and cataloged the stones that have served as Virginia City's sidewalks for more than a century. Once a new, stable base has been laid, the sidewalk stones will be replaced.

News From Across the Nation is assembled by Charlie Ban. Send your news to cban@naco.org.

WORD SEARCH **MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE, A CONSOLIDATED CITY-BOROUGH, ALASKA** Created by: Mary Ann Barton

B B A D T F W H L Y S R Q R H P I O I D
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GOLD: The population in the area surged after the discovery of gold in the late 19th century.

HOCKEY: Ice hockey is a popular sport in Anchorage, especially with the addition of the Anchorage Wolverines, a North American Hockey League team.

IDITAROD: Each March, the Iditarod Dog Sled Race gets its ceremonial start in Anchorage.

MOOSE: Wildlife experts estimate Anchorage is home to about 1,500 wild moose.

MOUNTAINS: You can see six mountain ranges from Anchorage: The Alaska, Aleutian, Chugach, Kenai, Talkeetna and Tordrillo ranges.

OIL: In 1968, oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay, eventually bringing billions of dollars to the area.

POPULATION: The population of the borough is about 291,247 as of 2020.

SALMON: Five species of salmon populate rivers and streams in Anchorage.

TEMPERATURES: The coldest temperature on record is -38 degrees Fahrenheit in 1947; the highest temperature recorded is 90 degrees Fahrenheit in 2019.

VOLCANOES: Several active volcanoes are located nearby, with one erupting in 2009.

DAYLIGHT: Talk about long summer days — Anchorage can get up to 22 hours of sunlight in the summer.

DENALI: The tallest mountain in North America at 20,320 feet, is located 130 miles north of Anchorage.

EARTHQUAKE: A magnitude 9.2 earthquake in 1964 hit the area doing millions of dollars in damage. It killed 115 people.

GEOGRAPHY: Anchorage stretches over 2,000 square miles.

GLACIERS: There are 60 glaciers within 50 miles of Anchorage.

BEHIND THE SEAL **ANCHORAGE BOROUGH, Alaska**

The ship on the seal symbolizes the voyages of British Captain James Cook (1728-1779) on the HMS Resolution, which explored the site of Anchorage in today's Cook Inlet.



The airplane represents Anchorage's pivotal role as a transportation hub

The anchor represents the origin of the name Anchorage — Captain Cook anchored adjacent to where the city center is now located. He wrote "anchorage" on his maps.

The sun symbolizes the city's northern latitude and wide variation of daylight hours from summer to winter.

If you would like your county's seal featured in "Behind the Seal," contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

WHY BROADBAND is important to **TELEHEALTH**

\$946 A YEAR is the average savings per household
 —Connected Nation Michigan 2021 Report

If connectivity is implemented successfully, households that go online to seek out health information will save an estimated \$946.73 in a year.

For 20 years, Connected Nation has worked with over 650 communities to close the Digital Divide in the areas that need it most. CN can help identify funding opportunities and guide your community through the process. Our expertise will provide access to the most up-to-date state and federal broadband funding.

Learn more about how our team can help close the **Digital Divide** in your community

ConnectedNation.org

Chris Pedersen
 877-846-7710
info@connectednation.org

