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**Recommendations to insure all Clevelanders with mental illness – and all citizens – are treated safely with dignity and respect submitted to Mayor of Cleveland and United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio**

Cuyahoga County, OH – Recommendations focusing on community involvement, training and collaboration were submitted to Mayor Frank Jackson and Steven Dettlebach of the U.S. Attorney General’s Office by Members of the Mental Health Task Force convened by the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County. The Mental Health Task Force was formed to respond to issues pertaining to mental health that were identified in the U.S. Department of Justice Investigation of the Cleveland Division of Police.

“The Mental Health Task Force felt it was important to encompass all behavioral health issues when crafting these recommendations for the consent decree,” explained William M. Denihan, CEO of the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County and Chair of the Task Force. “Therefore, whenever mental illness is used throughout the recommendations it also includes alcohol, drug and other addictions, as well as developmental disabilities.”

The Mental Health Task Force, comprised of representatives from over 50 organizations, established three overarching recommendations that are explained in the document:

1. Establishment of a Citizen Police Relationship Oversight Committee to foster relationships, review effectiveness of the CIT program, and provide general oversight of the consent decree to ensure its implementation and suggest further improvements through three subcommittees focusing on oversight, positive interaction and education.
2. Expand all aspects of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and other culturally competent trainings for Cleveland police officers and dispatchers.
3. Address the internal working relationships between police officers, dispatchers, and the court and behavioral health systems, including daily information sharing and data collection to identify individuals that require behavioral health follow-up.

Recommendations go beyond improving the quality and depth of training police officers and dispatchers and include the development of tools necessary to assist police officers when interacting with individuals living with a mental illness.

“The ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County will open a Drop-off Center on the West Side for police to transport people with a mental illness to reduce travel time and volume at St. Vincent Charity Psychiatric Emergency Room,” explained Mr. Denihan. “The Board will also create a Special Co-Responder Team on the East and West Sides that will include a social worker, mental health expert and seasoned police officer to handle extreme mental health crisis situations and follow-up upon individuals released from treatment.”

Programs will also be developed for jail diversion for low risk non-violent offenders with a mental illness and ensure that referrals are made for treatment and discharge planning if a person with mental illness is arrested and held in jail.

The Mental Health Task Force recommends that the Oversight Subcommittee of the Citizen Police Relationship Committee will provide citizen oversight through consistent review of the consent decree to ensure its implementation. Members of the Mental Health Task Force also hope that the recommendations providing elements of training, continued practice and oversight that will insure all Clevelanders with mental illness - and all citizens – are treated safely with dignity and respect.

The recommendations, including a roster of Mental Health Task Force members, can be viewed at [www.adamhsc.org](http://www.adamhsc.org).

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