

President Preckwinkle, Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. TASC appreciates the chance to express our support for the President's FY16 budget proposal, and the County's ongoing investment in criminal justice diversion programs and behavioral health care for people involved in the justice system.

My name is Cicely Bailey, and I am TASC's Adult Criminal Justice Program Services Supervisor for Cook County. Founded in 1976, TASC is a statewide, nonprofit agency that provides substance use disorder assessments, case management, monitoring, and referrals to treatment and recovery support services for the Illinois criminal justice system, in partnership with courts, jails and prisons, and probation and parole departments. We work to break the cycle of drugs, crime, and incarceration, and to support people on pathways to restored health and citizenship.

Our work lies at the intersection of public safety and health and hospitals systems and budgets. Because the need for behavioral health services is so great among justice-involved individuals, our work at this juncture is a critical part of the County's efforts to address untreated substance use and mental health conditions.

**I'm here today to express TASC's support for the President's FY16 budget proposal.**

### Criminal Justice Diversion

**We want to express thanks for the County's ongoing investment in criminal justice diversion programs** that help keep residents in their communities and connect them with substance use and mental health services.

For example, TASC partners in an array of deferred prosecution programs that keep people accountable while also providing an opportunity for participants to avoid getting a criminal conviction on record. These programs connect people with substance use and mental health services and treatment, and they also help participants avoid the collateral consequences that accompany a conviction and stand in the way of citizenship and community integration.

We support continued funding for these programs, which save the County money in reduced court costs and connect people to needed treatment and services.

### Behavioral Health Care for Justice-Involved Individuals

**We also want to thank the County for its investment in behavioral health care for people involved in the justice system.** With support through the Health and Hospitals System, this work helps address the substance use and mental health disorders that often underlie criminal behavior.

For example, TASC works to enroll people who are eligible into the Medicaid program as they come through County Jail intake. Enrollment in the program is a critical first step toward gaining access to care. Since this work began at in 2013, more than 12,000 people have had applications initiated and approved.

TASC also works in the Jail's discharge planning program for clients with serious mental illness. We provide referrals to treatment and outreach to families, supporting continuity of care as people transition from the Jail back into their communities.

Again, we support continued funding for these efforts, which connect people to needed behavioral health services.

**In closing, TASC looks forward to continuing our partnership with the County in this important work.** Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today.

**Cicely Bailey**

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