



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 22-2776, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ITEM AMENDMENT

Department: Cook County Board of Commissioners

Request: Amendment to the Alternative Health Intervention and Response Pilot Program Task Force creating a position for a community representative to sit on the Task Force.

Item Number: 22-0737

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Account(s): N/A

Original Text of Item:

A RESOLUTION FORMING THE ALTERNATIVE HEALTH INTERVENTION AND RESPONSE PILOT PROGRAM'S TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, recognizing an increase in the number of individuals seeking behavioral and mental health services, the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution in October 2021 declaring mental health a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, there has been an expansion in our public consciousness and amplified discussion regarding the role of government entities and law enforcement in responding to mental and behavioral health emergencies, especially in light of the need for alternative public safety programs; and

WHEREAS, on August 25, 2021, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed into law in Illinois the Community Emergency Services and Support Act ("Act"), 50 ILCS 754/1 through 754/65; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires every unit of local government that provides or manages ambulance service or similar emergency medical response to coordinate with mobile mental and behavioral health services established by the Illinois Department of Human Service's Division of Mental Health ("Division of Mental Health"). The Act requires coordination with a newly established 988 hotline, which connects callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and

WHEREAS, the Act aims to provide callers seeking mental or behavioral health support with an appropriate mental health response, specifically with professionals trained in de-escalation techniques, knowledge of community services and resources, and respectful interaction with those experiencing a crisis while at the same time diverting non-violent/non-criminal calls from a police response; and

WHEREAS, the Act contemplates mobile response teams to divert those in crisis from interactions with law enforcement whenever possible and link them with available appropriate community services; and

WHEREAS, the Act endeavors to meet a community need with an appropriate response, reducing law enforcement responses to those requiring mental or behavioral health care using mobile unit responders where available for dispatch; and

WHEREAS, the Act is effective starting January 1, 2022, and requires local governments to begin coordination with the Illinois Division of Mental Health and its mobile units on or before January 1, 2023 if the unit of local government provides or coordinates ambulance or similar emergency medical response or transportation services for individuals with emergency medical needs; and

WHEREAS, Cook County operates the Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) to administer Cook County's 911 system in unincorporated Cook County and via an agreement with Berkely, Blue Island, Dixmoor, Ford Heights, Golf, Harvey, Hometown, Indian Head Park, Lyons, Merrionette Park, Metra, Northlake, Palos Park, Park Ridge and Phoenix; and

WHEREAS, due to the implementation of the proposed ARPA funded Crisis Intervention Pilot Program which will be known as the Alternative Health Intervention and Response Pilot Program ("Pilot Program"), Cook County will establish a mobile crisis intervention program; and

WHEREAS, an Alternative Health Intervention and Response Task Force ("Task Force") should be established to assist in developing and implementing the Pilot Program, determine compliance with the Act and determine details of an ordinance to further establish such a program (a model ordinance entitled "Alternative Health Intervention and Response Ordinance" is attached to this Resolution for reference and is marked as Exhibit A); and

WHEREAS, given the passage of the Act, the various Cook County crisis and mental health ARPA initiatives and the nationwide and local push to maintain an appropriate response to people in crisis while insulating them from interactions with the criminal justice system where possible, the Task Force shall set County-led goals to reduce reliance on the criminal justice system, develop a system to support those with mental and behavioral health needs including on-scene crisis assistance, refer people for treatment, connect those in need to crisis care and provide follow up support for emergency services provided in unincorporated Cook County;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Task Force is established to determine how the Pilot Program will be established, how the approved ARPA initiatives can be used to aid the Pilot Program, and to make recommendations to become operational on or before January 1, 2023; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall include representatives from the Cook County Board of Commissioners, the Cook County Department of Public Health, Cook County Health, the Cook County Sheriff's Office, the Cook County Board President's Office, the Justice Advisory Council, and the Emergency Telephone System Board, and a community representative. The lead sponsor of this Resolution shall serve as the representative of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, and the remaining members shall be appointed by each above-named office or the Cook County Board President as appropriate. The members of the Task Force shall be selected within 30 days of the passage of this Resolution and the Executive Director of the Justice Advisory Council and a representative of Cook County Health or the Cook County Department of Public Health shall co-chair the Task Force; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall develop and make recommendations to the Cook County Board of Commissioners regarding the establishment of the Pilot Program on or before August 1, 2022.