



Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office Partners with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to Offer Behavioral Services to Defendants Deemed Incapable to Proceed

(Charlotte, NC) – The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) is offering a new service program for people detained at the Mecklenburg County Detention Center (MCDC) who are deemed Incapable to Proceed to trial. Starting on December 7, 2022, eligible defendants began receiving Behavioral Health and Capacity Restoration Services. With financial support from the Governor's Mental Health and Substance Use Task Force, this pilot program is the first capacity restoration program in a detention center in North Carolina.

Once a criminal defendant is deemed Incapable to Proceed (ITP) by the court, the court orders capacity restoration. NCDHHS's new program, NC RISE, will address the expanding needs of people determined to be ITP. Currently in North Carolina, capacity restoration services are only provided in the three state psychiatric hospitals. NCDHHS seeks to develop a system that can be responsive to people's clinical needs and current legal status by offering services in alternative settings, such as detention centers and within the community.

"There is a nationwide crisis in this country whereby States and their hospitals are overwhelmed with ITP patients needing capacity restoration," said Dr. Robert Cochrane, Director of Forensic Services for the Division of State Operated Healthcare Facilities. "With the steady rise of mentally ill defendants being found ITP and ordered to receive CR services, innovative and cost-effective alternatives are needed to address the demand and mental health needs of this population."

"We're excited to be the first detention center in North Carolina to offer a capacity restoration program," said Sheriff McFadden. "This partnership is going to allow our residents to receive the help and services they need. We are so proud to implement this initiative in the Mecklenburg County Detention Center and look forward to the positive outcomes that will come as a result of this collaborative partnership."

This detention center-based restoration program will provide an array of services, including psychiatric care, individual and group counseling, substance abuse treatment, psychoeducation, and targeted case management. It will allow clinical care to be provided in the most appropriate setting, reduce unnecessary admissions to state psychiatric hospitals, and provide greater access to treatment. It will also result in shorter periods of hospitalization and quicker resolution of criminal charges.

NCDHHS awarded a contract to Wellpath Recovery Solutions to implement the NC RISE program at the Mecklenburg County Detention Center. NC Rise provides capacity restoration and behavioral health services to individuals who cannot be discharged to a community provider. Jeremy Barr, President of Wellpath Recovery Solutions, LLC noted, "Wellpath

Recovery Solutions is honored to partner with NCDHHS and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office to implement the North Carolina RISE Program, which will increase access to care for individuals with mental illness. We look forward to a long partnership and providing more timely access to care to those in need."

Increasing access to treatment and capacity restoration services addresses one of NCDHHS's top priorities – behavioral health and resilience. NCDHHS hopes this will be the first of several detention center and community-based CR pilot programs throughout the state. Prioritizing the behavioral health needs of individuals awaiting trial will not only resolve the legal charges of detainees but will strengthen the legal and mental health systems of North Carolina.

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