



SPONSOR: Rep. Longhurst & Rep. Schwartzkopf &
Rep. Michael Smith

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 17

ESTABLISHING THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS CARE TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND MAKE FINDINGS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CREATING A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS CARE SYSTEM IN
THIS STATE.

1 WHEREAS, the lack of adequate and organized crisis services in the community has put police departments in a
2 difficult position; and

3 WHEREAS, police departments are forced to balance public safety and community service; and

4 WHEREAS, often, the quickest and easiest solution is arrest and incarceration of an individual who is suffering
5 from mental health or substance abuse crisis; and

6 WHEREAS, prisons lack the policies, resources, and staff trained in behavioral health to deal with the needs of a
7 person with behavioral health needs, particularly someone in crisis; and

8 WHEREAS, offenders with mental illness are incarcerated twice as long and are 3 times more likely to be sexually
9 assaulted while incarcerated; and

10 WHEREAS, offenders with mental illness are also more likely to be in solitary confinement, which exacerbates
11 psychiatric symptoms; and

12 WHEREAS, even if released from incarceration, there are many adverse effects from incarceration such as
13 difficulty finding employment, higher risk of homelessness and rearrest, and interruption in Medicaid and other benefits;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, only 34% of prisoners in state prisons with a mental health problem receive mental health treatment
16 after admission into a correctional facility; and

17 WHEREAS, police often need to take persons suffering from a mental health or substance abuse crisis to a
18 hospital emergency room, who have inadequate numbers of behavioral health professional on staff, and transporting
19 individuals to hospitals is time consuming and often futile; and

20 WHEREAS, Delaware needs to redirect its reliance on law enforcement as mental health crisis responders and
21 develop a crisis service system based in behavior health principles; and

WHEREAS, based upon national guideless, there are 3 major components to a comprehensive crisis system, and each must be in place in order for the system to be optimally effective, and these are: (1) Regional Crisis Call Center; (2) Mobile Crisis Response Team; and (3) Crisis Receiving and Stabilization Facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is time for law enforcement to return to policing and for mental health professionals to assume the role of crisis response, and time to develop and implement a behavioral crisis service system in this State.

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the 151st General Assembly of the State of Delaware that the Behavioral Health Crisis Care Task Force be established to study and make findings and recommendations regarding creating behavioral health crisis care system in this State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force be composed of 15 members, as follows:

(1) 2 members of the House of Representatives, 1 from the Majority Caucus and 1 from the Minority Caucus, appointed by the Speaker of the House, 1 of whom shall be the Chair of the Task Force.

(2) 2 members of the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, 1 from the Majority Caucus and 1 from the Minority Caucus, 1 of whom shall be Vice-Chair of the Task Force.

(3) The Director of the Division of Social Services.

(4) The Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

(5) The Chief of Police of New Castle County Police Department.

(6) The Chief of Police of Milford Police Department.

(7) The Chief of Police of Georgetown Police Department.

(8) The Directors of Mobile Crisis in Northern and Southern Delaware.

(9) The Directors of Sussex County, Kent County, and New Castle County Emergency Operations Centers.

(10) The Executive Director of the Criminal Justice Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members serving by virtue of position may designate another individual to attend a Task Force, and must provide the designation in writing to the Chair. An individual attending a meeting for a member serving by virtue of position has the same duties and rights as the member serving by virtue of position.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House notify the Chair of the Task Force's creation and provide the Chair with a copy of the legislation creating the Task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chair of the Task Force be responsible for guiding the administration of the Task Force by, at a minimum, doing all of the following:

(1) Notifying the individuals listed in lines 31 through 42 of the formation of the Task Force and the need to appoint a member, if applicable.

(2) Setting a date, time, and place for the initial meeting.

(3) Supervising the preparation and distribution of Task Force meeting notices, agendas, minutes, correspondence, and reports.

(4) Sending to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore, and the Director of the Division of Research of Legislative Council, after the first meeting of the Task Force, a list of the members of the Task Force and the person who appointed them.

(5) Providing meeting notices, agendas, and minutes to the Director of the Division of Research of Legislative Council.

(6) Ensuring that the final report of the Task Force is submitted to Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore, with copies to all members of the General Assembly, The Governor, the Director and Librarian of the Division of Research of Legislative Council, and the Delaware Public Archives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force must hold its first meeting no later than 60 days after passage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a quorum of the Task Force is a majority of its members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Division of Health and Social Services and law enforcement agencies in this State shall provide data to the Task Force that is necessary for the Task Force to perform its work.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED additional members, including criminal justice stakeholders, mental health professionals, and experts in related fields of study, may be appointed as needed by the Chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that:

(1) Official action by the Task Force, including making findings and recommendations, requires the approval of a quorum of the Task Force.

(2) The Task Force may adopt rules necessary for its operation. If the Task Force does not adopt rules or if the adopted rules do not govern a given situation, Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure controls.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House Democratic Caucus is responsible for providing reasonable and necessary support staff and materials for the Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chair must compile a report containing a summary of the Task Force's work regarding the issues assigned to it, including any findings and recommendations, and submit the report to the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Director and Librarian of the Division of Research of Legislative Council no later than February 4, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Concurrent Resolution expires on the date the Task Force submits its findings and recommendations.

SYNOPSIS

This Resolution establishes the Behavioral Health Crisis Care Task Force to study and make findings and recommendations regarding creating a behavioral health crisis care system in this State.