

1 **RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF FULTON**  
2 **COUNTY'S COMMITMENT TO THE NATIONAL "STEPPING UP" INITIATIVE TO**  
3 **REDUCE MENTAL ILLNESS AMONG THE FULTON COUNTY JAIL POPULATION;**  
4 **AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**  
5

6 **WHEREAS**, counties routinely provide treatment services to the estimated 2  
7 million people with serious mental illnesses booked into jail each year; and; and

8 **WHEREAS**, prevalence rates of serious mental illnesses in jails are three to six  
9 times higher than for the general population; and

10 **WHEREAS**, without the appropriate treatment and services, people with mental  
11 illnesses continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic  
12 outcomes for these individuals and their families; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Fulton County and all counties take pride in their responsibility to  
14 protect and enhance the health, welfare and safety of its residents in efficient and cost-  
15 effective ways; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the National Association of Counties, the Council of State  
17 Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation  
18 launched the national Stepping Up initiative in May 2015 as a Call to Action for counties  
19 to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails; and

20 **WHEREAS**, Fulton County joined the national Stepping Up initiative May 4,  
21 2016, thereby committing to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our  
22 county jail, share lessons learned with other counties in our state and across the  
23 country to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees and  
24 residents to participate in Stepping Up; and

25 **WHEREAS**, to gather appropriate data, Fulton County will implement Stepping  
26 Up's recommended three-step approach: 1) Establish a shared definition of seriously

1 mentally ill (“SMI”) for Stepping Up efforts used throughout local criminal justice and  
2 behavioral health systems; 2) Use a validated mental health screening tool on every  
3 person booked into the jail and refer people who screen positive for symptoms of SMI to  
4 a follow-up clinical assessment by a licensed mental health professional; and 3) Record  
5 clinical assessment results and regularly report on this population; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Fulton County will work towards achieving Stepping Up’s five  
7 targets: 1) 5% annual reduction in average jail population; 2) 10% annual reduction in  
8 jail bookings; 3) 5% annual reduction in average length of jail stay; 4) 10% annual  
9 increase in post release connections to care; and 5) 5% annual reduction in recidivism;  
10 and

11 **WHEREAS**, multiple agencies will be working together to achieve these goals,  
12 including the Fulton County Justice and mental Health Task Force, chaired by Fulton  
13 County Superior Court, other local and state partners from the judiciary, law  
14 enforcement, community, consumers , advocates, mental health and substance abuse  
15 providers and other stakeholders.

16 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Commissioners of Fulton  
17 County does hereby reaffirm Fulton County’s commitment to the national Stepping Up  
18 initiative’s goals and sign on to the Stepping Up “Set, Measure, Achieve” Call to Action  
19 to identify and publicly commit to goals that demonstrate reduced prevalence of mental  
20 illness in local justice systems.

21 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this Resolution shall become effective when  
22 passed and adopted, and that all resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict with this  
23 Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent of the conflict.

1 **PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County,  
2 Georgia this 15<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021.

3 **SPONSORED BY:**

4 Bob Ellis

5  
6 Bob Ellis, Commissioner  
7 District 2

8 **CO-SPONSORED BY:**

9 Natalie Hall

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11 Natalie Hall, Vice-Chairman  
12 District 4

13 **CO-SPONSORED BY:**

14 Lee Morris

15  
16 Lee Morris, Commissioner  
17 District 3

18  
19 ATTEST:



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21  
22  
23 Tonya R. Grier, Clerk to the Commission  
24  
25

26 **APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

27 Kaye Woodard Burwell

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29 Kaye Woodard Burwell, Interim County Attorney  
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