



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Greene County set to help fund Behavioral Crisis Center with Burrell Behavioral Health

The Greene County Commission and leaders of Burrell Behavioral Health are set to sign a contract that will provide funding for a Behavioral Crisis Center – the first of its kind in southwest Missouri – available for members of our community needing help with mental health and substance abuse issues.

A formal contract signing event will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18 in Room 212 of the Greene County Historic Courthouse.

In 2017, Greene County voters passed a sales tax that prioritized, among other resolutions, funding to address mental health and substance use in our area. Since that time, the Commission has collaborated at a variety of levels to identify specific needs and solutions that would provide much-needed care, all while also easing the burden on law enforcement, emergency responders and the criminal justice system.

The County, along with its community partners, came together in 2018 and 2019 to study mental health and substance use in-depth. The study, which was spearheaded by the Healthy Living Alliance, revealed that Greene County's suicide rate (24.8 per 100,000) is higher than in the state (18.5) and nation (14). Similarly, the county depression rate, measured by the Medicare population with depression (22.8 percent) is also higher than the state (20 percent) or nation (16.7 percent). We have fewer inpatient beds (37.8 beds per 100,000 population) than national standards (50 beds per 100,000). Stigma was an often-cited barrier—one in three young adults (age 18-35) chose not to get treatment because of stigma.

The 18-month study further identified crisis stabilization as a key need. This prompted local leadership to visit “rapid access” crisis clinics in Kansas and Indiana where citizens experiencing a behavioral health or substance-use crisis can get immediate stabilization and treatment. It was determined that a similar model could be employed in our community. In late 2019, Burrell Behavioral Health presented the Commission a proposal for the creation of the Behavioral Crisis Center in Springfield.

The Feb. 18 contract signing will approve \$1 million in public funding for a Behavioral Crisis Center to be located at 800 S. Park Ave., the current site of a Burrell social-setting detox unit. The Behavioral Crisis Center will serve adults ages 18 and up with emergent mental health and substance-use needs (excluding situations requiring acute medical care). Following up to 23 hours of observation, individuals will be connected to the proper level of care (i.e. detox, outpatient therapy, hospitalization, etc.).

“This contract signing is a real milestone. It is the result of a great deal of research, study and collaboration on the part of not just the Commission, but many individuals and agencies who continue to work together to bring needed resources and services to the citizens of our community,” said Commissioner Harold Bengsch, who also serves at the co-chair of the Healthy Living Alliance’s Mental Health and Substance Use Task Force that worked to make possible the community mental health study. “The Commission feels funding this unique center is a step in the right direction to address our County’s growing mental health needs.”

“As Greene County's Community Mental Health Center, we are beyond appreciative to the County Commission for trusting Burrell with the establishment and service provision of this rapid-access Behavioral Crisis Center," said Burrell President & CEO Dr. C.J. Davis. "With our governmental, law enforcement and healthcare partners all on board, we feel this unique concept will be an enormous asset for Springfield and Greene County, and serve as a blueprint for collaborative, crisis-level mental healthcare nationally. This truly is a historic moment for our community.”

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Greene County is the State of Missouri’s fourth most populous county, serving more than 275,000 people (2010 census). Its mission is to provide all citizens of Greene County, including those in its cities, a safe and thriving community through excellent customer service, unparalleled dedication, and the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. The Greene County Commission is the executive body of Greene County operating under guidelines established in the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri. Within that authority the Commission enacts ordinances, resolutions and policies, supervises the activities of county departments, fixes

salaries, adopts the annual budget, provides for construction and other services, and conducts hearings on planning and zoning matters.

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