



Richmond City Sheriff's Office
Sheriff C. T. Woody, Jr.



PRESS RELEASE

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RICHMOND AND CHESTERFIELD SHERIFFS TOUT REGIONAL COOPERATION IN RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH GRANT

Richmond, Virginia – Earlier this week, Governor McAuliffe announced the award of grants which will go to funding six pilot programs in individual jails in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These grants will provide funds to pilot programs for inmates with mental health and low functioning diagnoses in either local or regional jails. In a press statement released on December 12 of this year, Governor McAuliffe is quoted as saying the following: “It is imperative that individuals requiring mental health services receive the proper care from the state, especially in situations where the person is incarcerated.” The Governor went on to state, “The grants appropriated to DCJS will improve the services and accountability of our judicial facilities and ultimately safeguard the wellbeing of detained individuals requiring mental healthcare.”

The Richmond City Sheriff’s Office and the Chesterfield County Sheriff’s Office were each awarded a grant for their respective agencies. While both have made drug addiction recovery a central mission in their jails, both Sheriff C.T. Woody, Jr. and Sheriff Karl Leonard have each spoken passionately about the need to address the mentally ill who are incarcerated as well.

“After someone with a mental health diagnosis commits a crime, there is no other place for them to go, either because the beds at the mental health facilities are full, or because they have no family that can care for them the way they need to be cared for,” said Sheriff Woody. “When someone with a mental illness can’t be sent anywhere else, they are sent here. I have always said jail is no place for the mentally ill. We have worked with what funding we’ve had to do what we can for them, but it’s difficult to give them the quality of care that they deserve. That is why we, along with RBHA and OAR, our partners in this grant, worked diligently to apply for this grant and am honored that the Richmond City Sheriff’s Office was chosen to receive this grant. This pilot program will allow us to hire trained, effective staff that will be dedicated solely to these individuals, both while they are incarcerated and also after release.”

Chesterfield County Sheriff Karl Leonard was also hopeful about the grant. “We’re grateful to receive this grant and to have the opportunity to put it to good use. Our board of supervisors recognized this need and provided funding to hire additional staffing, however, this grant expands our ability to provide the care needed, as we do not have the resources to give adequate and effective care to those

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with mental illnesses. This is an at-risk population that suffers greatly when they don't receive the care they need, and I am happy that we will be able to provide that care to those individuals in our facility or are mentally ill or low functioning.”

The grants are provided by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) at the behest of the Virginia General Assembly, and were applied for some months ago by each local or regional correctional facility individually. The first few months of the grant will include a planning process, followed by implementation. The General Assembly appropriated \$1 million for projects for the period of January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017, and then another \$2.5 million beginning on July 1, 2017 and ending July 1, 2018.

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