



## Florida Sheriffs Association Position on Continued Funding of Florida's Community Mental Health Services

March 2011

The Florida Sheriffs Association does not support any reduction to the funding of Florida's Community Mental Health Services. There are many negative implications to reduced funding for Florida's mentally ill and those suffering from substance abuse, especially with the 97 percent reductions proposed by the Florida Senate.

Individuals discharged from local crisis stabilization units, hospital emergency rooms, state hospitals or forensic facilities will not have any access to the treatment that they desperately need. Outpatient mental health treatment will no longer be an option for these individuals, the courts or community corrections. Citizens residing in Florida who are uninsured, living in poverty or on the margins of the middle class will not have treatment services available to them, their families or children.

The implications of these reductions have clear consequences on public safety, especially considering that under current funding levels:

- On any given day in Florida, there are approximately 15,000 local jail detainees, and 40,000 individuals under correctional supervision in the community with a mental illness.
- Annually, as many as 125,000 people with mental illness requiring treatment are arrested and booked into Florida jails. A recent study found that 31 percent of women and 14 percent of men being booked into local jails have major mental illness.
- Florida ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in mental health funding and 35<sup>th</sup> in substance abuse funding when compared to other states.

**To prevent adverse affects on Florida's communities, families and public safety the Florida Sheriffs support the continued funding of Florida's Community Mental Health Services at the FY2010-2011 level.**

