



**Rick Staly, Sheriff**

## **FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

*"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."*

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **FCSO Awarded \$532,000 Grant for Mental Health Program in Flagler County Jail**

The U.S. Justice Department, Bureau of Justice Assistance, has awarded the Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) \$532,360 to support a collaborative approach to improve responses and outcomes for adults with mental illness, substance abuse and related disorders who enter the criminal justice system. This was a highly competitive national grant program and the FCSO was one of only three Sheriff's Offices that were selected from across the country.

Collectively, Flagler County trends and statistics reflect a significant community mental health services challenge for the Sheriff's Office and local treatment providers driven by the high level of mental illness and substance abuse disorders in the community and the interconnectedness of opioid abuse and suicide. The grant will allow effective training, timely screening for mental illness and substance abuse, evidence-based treatment and case management for individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

The Flagler County JMH Project, spearheaded by the Sheriff's Office, will involve a multi-faceted effort to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment resources to county jail inmates by embedding a certified mental health/substance abuse clinician within the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility and partnering with a local service provider to insure continuum of care after the inmate is released from the jail. The overall goal of the grant is to reduce criminal justice involvement by offenders and reduce suicides caused by mental illness and addiction.

"It's clear that Flagler County has an urgent need to prevent, reduce, and treat those with mental health and substance abuse problems. Left untreated, the end results can become suicide, arrests for criminal acts and jail time," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "A failed national policy shift decades ago has made county jails defacto mental health and addiction treatment wards, usually without any real treatment. Partnering with a research team from UNF and a treatment provider, this grant will enable us to design and implement a program in the jail for our inmate population that needs mental health or substance

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abuse treatment while in the jail and after their release. The key to success is aftercare so the treatment does not end when someone is released from the jail.”

FCSO applied for this grant in early 2020 before the call for police reforms which often highlight and focus on police response to crisis and addiction intervention. This grant allows FCSO to once again be on the cutting edge of professional community policing and with Sheriff Staly’s agency directive to bring federal tax dollars, paid by our residents, back to Flagler County to improve our community. This grant provides another tool for FCSO to use to help rehabilitate inmates directly at the root cause of their incarceration so they can become productive residents when released.

The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHC) promotes innovative cross-system collaboration and provides grants directly to states, local governments, and federally recognized Indian tribes. It is designed to improve responses to people with mental illnesses who are involved in the criminal justice system. JMHC funding requires collaboration with a mental health agency.

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