



MEDIA RELEASE

Lincoln County Board of Commissioners

Casey Miller
Public Information Officer
225 West Olive Street
Newport, OR 97365
Phone: 541.265.0211
cmiller@co.lincoln.or.us

Lincoln County to conduct a Sequential Intercept Mapping Exercise (SIM)

Approximately 40 members of the public safety, behavioral health, treatment, housing, non-profit and faith communities in Lincoln County will gather Aug. 29-30 to chart a new path for dealing with people with mental illness who are in the criminal justice system.

The GAINS Center, part of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will send a team to the county to conduct a Sequential Intercept Mapping Exercise (SIM). Each year, the agency offers a competitive process for communities interested in this process. This year, 54 communities applied, and just seven were selected, including Lincoln County.

Last October, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution joining the national Stepping Up initiative, which is designed to bring focus to this problem.

County Commissioner Bill Hall and Sheriff Curtis Landers, who are jointly leading the county's Stepping Up efforts, said the SIM mapping exercise represents a major opportunity to advance the county's work on this problem.

"We'll spend a day and a half together, going into detail on what services currently exist, where the gaps are, and agreeing on a plan to fill those gaps," Hall said. "Other communities who have been through this tell me it's been an invaluable exercise."

Sheriff Curtis Landers said he's enthusiastic about the potential for building a more effective system: "The right investments now will produce better outcomes in the long run. Sending people through our court system and to our jail or the state prison system again and again is very costly. We can have better outcomes, and at less cost."

Nationally, 377 counties representing about 40 percent of the county's population, have signed on to Stepping Up, which is a joint effort of the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments and the American Psychiatric Association.

It's estimated that two million people in prisons and jails nationally are there primarily due to mental illness. In Lincoln County, it's estimated that at any given time, 30 percent of the inmates in the jail have been diagnosed with mental illness, and one-third of those have severe and persistent mental illness.

###

