



May 4, 2017

**Lt. Gov. Brian Calley  
Kent County Healthcare, Public  
Safety & Emergency Response  
Professionals Announce New  
County-Wide Initiative**



Lt. Gov. Brian Calley joined healthcare, behavioral health, public safety and emergency responses professionals from 24 organizations and municipalities to announce a new initiative focused on providing better – and more coordinated – responses for adults struggling with mental health issues.

Representatives from the Kent County Chiefs of Police Association, Network180, Mercy Health Saint Mary's and others unveiled the Kent County Crisis Intervention Team, or KCCIT, during this morning's Grand Valley Metro Council meeting. As Chair of the State of Michigan's Jail Diversion Council, Calley shared his support for the initiative, which is being introduced during Mental Health Awareness Month.

Calley also presented a \$1.2 million grant to Network180, which is the community mental health authority for Kent County. The grant will be used to renovate a Network180 facility into a 24/7 crisis center that will provide immediate psychiatric care for individuals experiencing a behavioral health cri-

sis rather than sending them to the emergency room or to jail. The crisis center will offer a walk-in area for crisis intervention, a secure 24-hour crisis stabilization unit and a small-scale crisis residential unit to assist with client placement post discharge.

*"Network180 has been a great partner in our efforts to divert Michiganders who need mental health assistance toward treatment instead of incarceration,"* Calley said. *"This new crisis center creates another opportunity for people to get the help they need in order to be productive and independent in their lives. By working together, partners in West Michigan are giving local residents the chance for positive outcomes during difficult situations."*

More than three years in the making, this collaboration of law enforcement, acute care facilities, psychiatric care facilities and community mental health providers is designed to provide better care for adults with mental illness by reducing misdirection, conserving resources and addressing critical needs. It will:

- ◆ Provide police officers with crisis intervention training so they are better equipped to deal with individuals with mental illness
- ◆ Provide dispatchers and corrections officers with crisis intervention training
- ◆ Ensure a system of services that is friendly to individuals with mental illness and provide a forum for area organizations and agencies to col-

laborate

- ◆ Improve mental health pre-arrest diversion systems that are more efficient, effective and responsive to all mental health system participants

The \$50,000 training program, is being paid through grants from Network180, Metro Health Hospital Foundation and the Kent County Chiefs of Police Association.

*"Officers who respond to 911 calls for help in dealing with someone grappling with mental illness have limited tools and response options,"* said Mark Herald, Director of East Grand Rapids Public Safety. *"They can send someone to jail or to the emergency room – and all too often, neither is the best response."*

*"This initiative is a chance to fix a system that has been broken for decades. It will provide much-needed training for our officers so that they are better equipped to de-escalate tense situations when they are called to intervene."*

*"At a national level, we have seen positive outcomes including a reduction in the use of force, fewer arrests, fewer officer injuries and fewer injuries to the person in crisis."*

GVMC has assisted with the organization of the initiative and serves as the fiduciary for the effort. Sheriff Larry Stelma told the GVMC Board, *"You people paved the way"*. GVMC Executive Director John Weiss stated, *"This is a legacy project for Grand Valley Metro Council that will positively impact our community for years if not generations to come."*