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El Paso County Sheriff's Office

"Serving the community for over 150 years."

Bill Elder, Sheriff

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Medicaid Partnership to Save Taxpayers Money

The Sheriff's Office has partnered with the El Paso County Department of Human Services (DHS) to address the physical and mental health concerns of individuals released from jail in El Paso County. The Board of County Commissioners will read a resolution of this partnership at their meeting on Tuesday, October 6, 2015, at 9:00 AM. Mental illness and substance use are prominent health conditions in U.S. jails and it is widely known that people in jails experience higher rates of chronic and acute health conditions compared to the general population. Without ongoing physical and mental health care, many released individuals have greater potential to reoffend and relapse.

Beginning in August 2015, at no cost to tax payers, DHS employees began working inside the El Paso County Criminal Justice Center (CJC), meeting with individuals as they release from custody to provide information on local resources and programs, screen individuals for Medicaid eligibility, and immediately enrolling those that qualify. CJC is now the first county jail classified as an official Medicaid Enrollment Site in the state of Colorado. This partnership opportunity between DHS and EPSO to educate, screen, and enroll releasing individuals in local resources and Medicaid coverage may directly result in reduction in recidivism rates to CJC; better quality of health/life with access to medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment; a healthier inmate population; reduction in medical services contract; reduction in community / taxpayer burden of medical and mental health care needs; job placement assistance for individuals releasing from CJC; positive opportunities to become more productive and successful members of the community; and strengthening of the relationship among multiple agencies vested in public health and reduced recidivism.

As an official Medicaid Enrollment site, CJC is one of only a handful of jails across the country providing this kind of direct access to Medicaid screening for eligibility and direct enrollment, as well as providing other resources including Food Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Aid to Needy Disabled and job placement assistance, all as part of their release from incarceration. This access to DHS staff resources is also available to the public, as individuals can go to the CJC Lobby and request to speak to a DHS representative. DHS representatives are on-site Monday through Friday from 8 am – 5 pm, with expanded hours coming in the weeks ahead.

Attached to this Media Release is a copy of the Partnership Contract Highlights.

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