

Offered by Councillor JOHN R. CONNOLLY



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXAMINE THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

- WHEREAS*, The “Health of Boston 2009” draft report prepared by the Boston Public Health Commission reported that almost ten percent of adult Boston residents reported that their mental health was not good fifteen or more days during the previous month in 2006 and about one in five adults and one in four high school students reported experiencing a depressive episode (depressive symptoms for two weeks straight) during the past year; *and*,
- WHEREAS*, In the absence of specialized training in mental illness and knowledge of local treatment systems and their points of access, first responder response to an individual who is experiencing a mental health crisis may result in arrest, incarceration, and possibly injury, when treatment and referral may be the appropriate course of action; *and*,
- WHEREAS*, The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) was founded in 1979 and is now the largest grassroots organization in the nation dedicated to improving the lives of all people affected by mental illness and whose mission is to advocate, educate, and support individuals with mental illness and their families; *and*,
- WHEREAS*, NAMI has twenty-three local affiliates and over 2,500 members including individuals with mental illness, family members, and others in the mental health community. NAMI affiliates in Massachusetts include NAMI Dorchester, NAMI Greater Boston CAN, and a recently organized NAMI Latino Metro Boston group which holds meetings in Spanish and is designed to address the specific needs of the Latino community; *and*,
- WHEREAS*, A discussion between first responders and representatives from NAMI regarding current response procedures may lead to improved services for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, and a safer work environment for first responders.

THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss current procedures used by first responders when responding to situations where individuals are experiencing a mental health crisis. Representatives from NAMI, the Boston Police Department, the Boston Fire Department, Boston Emergency Medical Services, Boston Public Health Commission and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: February 1, 2010