



2023-08

**THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS PROMOTING STANDARDS
FOR HEALTH SERVICES IN JUVENILE DETENTION AND CONFINEMENT
FACILITIES**

WHEREAS, the nation's sheriffs, as the highest constitutional law enforcement officers in many counties, cities, and parishes throughout the country, are challenged with the problem of juveniles committing offenses; and

WHEREAS, the American criminal justice system holds juveniles in almost 1,800 detention and correctional facilities in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, a focus on rehabilitation of youths remains at the core of all health care and correctional programming in juvenile correctional facilities; and

WHEREAS, youths involved in the juvenile justice system represent a unique patient population, often hidden from public view; and

WHEREAS, juvenile suicide is a national tragedy and a major public health problem. For youths between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide is the second leading cause of death, resulting in more than 6,100 lives lost each year. Youths involved in the juvenile justice system have high rates of exposure to trauma and adverse childhood experiences; they are at higher risk than the general population for suicidal ideation and attempts; and

WHEREAS, youths involved in the juvenile and adult justice systems often have countless medical, dental, and mental health problems. There is a significant need for timely, trauma-informed, evidence-based, high-quality health services for these youths; and

WHEREAS, many of these medical, dental, and mental health conditions are first identified upon entering the juvenile justice system, are addressed while youths are incarcerated, and require continued care after release; and

WHEREAS, The Affordable Care Act (ACA) expands insurance coverage, providing opportunities for many youths in correctional settings; and

WHEREAS, standards for health services published by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care help juvenile detention and confinement facilities to increase the efficiency of their health services delivery, strengthen organizational effectiveness, reduce the risk of adverse patient outcomes and legal judgments, and improve the health of youths in their care and the communities to which those youths return; and

WHEREAS, America's future depends on the health of all its children;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the National Sheriffs' Association supports promoting standards for health services in juvenile detention and confinement facilities.

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