



March 19, 2018

Ms. Nadine Pfeiffer
Rule Review Manager
N.C. DHHS
Division of Health Service Regulation

By Email: DHHS.RulesCoordinator@dhhs.nc.gov

Re: Comments on the Proposed Re-adoption of Jails, Local Confinement Facilities
Rules, 10A NCAC 14J.

Dear Ms. Pfeiffer,

We are a coalition of associations and constituents that has been working since 2011 to ensure that persons with disabilities who become incarcerated in North Carolina receive appropriate care and treatment. Unfortunately, those living with mental illness, developmental disabilities and intellectual disabilities are disproportionally confined in our prisons and jails. North Carolina's Jail Regulations are critical to the humane and successful care and treatment of North Carolina's prisoners with disabilities. Thank you for extending the opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions to the Jail Rules, 10A NCAC 14J.

We write in support of all of the proposed revisions to the Jail Rules. Statewide standards are essential to protect the health and safety of people with disabilities who become confined in one of the 113 diverse Jails across our state. We applaud the Proposals requiring:

- Jail Operation Manuals to address a suicide prevention program, use of force and use of restraint;
- Screening upon admission for medical care needs, mental health care needs, developmental and intellectual disabilities, substance use disorders and risk of suicide;
- Enhanced supervision and observation rounds;
- Medical Plans to address the routine care for an inmate's needs related to mental health, developmental and intellectual disability and substance use disorders and to provide privacy during mental health examinations as well as addressing emergency needs related to substance use disorder;
- Available medical or mental health personnel to evaluate the needs of inmates related to mental health care, substance use disorder and a developmental or intellectual disability;
- Minimum safety requirements for padded cells; and
- Reduced suicide hazards within the jail facilities.

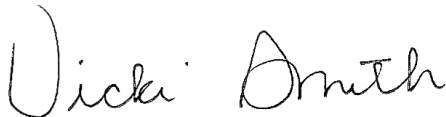
We are convinced the Proposed Rules will result in jail environments that are safer, more humane and more secure for inmates, officers and the public.

Ms. Pfeiffer
March 19, 2018
Page Two

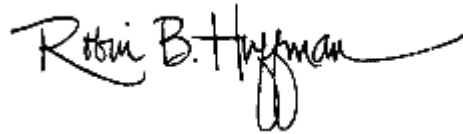
In the future, we hope the Jail Rules will address the dire need for adequate staffing, the use of segregation and necessary clinical assessments upon placement of an inmate in segregation and frequently thereafter, and the elimination of segregation for youth. Training requirements to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders, the initiation of timely referrals to appropriate providers, and to provide safeguards for individuals with mental illness who are disproportionately subjected to disciplinary or administrative segregation also need to be addressed in the Jail Rules.

Thank you again for your service. We are available to discuss these comments any time; please contact Susan H. Pollitt, Attorney, at 919 856-2195, Disability Rights North Carolina.

Sincerely,



Vicki Smith
Executive Director
Disability Rights North Carolina



Robin B. Huffman
Executive Director
N.C. Psychiatric Association



Kay Castillo
Director of Advocacy, Policy and Legislation
National Association of Social Workers, NC Chapter



Sally Cameron
Executive Director
NC Psychological Association

/s/ Nicholle Karim
Nicholle Karim
Interim Executive Director
The National Alliance on Mental Illness
(NAMI) North Carolina