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CIT International and PTACC Announce CIDaTS Initiative

Rapidly Connecting People to Treatment for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

(Ponte Vedra, Florida, November 2019) – In a new, national initiative designed to speed up entry and widen access to community-based services for people living with mental health and substance use disorders who come into contact with law enforcement, Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) International and the Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative (PTACC) announced today their first-ever partnership to provide an innovative approach capable of responding simultaneously to both of these health conditions. Named the Community Intervention Deflection and Treatment Strategy (CIDaTS), this much-needed approach between the oft-bifurcated mental health and substance use treatment systems will provide a “best path” connection-to-care strategy that streamlines service linkage when law enforcement comes into contact with individuals who need help.

CIDaTS was announced today at PTACC's 2nd Annual Deflection and Pre-Arrest Diversion Conference in Ponte Vedra, Florida.

"Communities across the nation are simultaneously grappling with how to adequately respond to three deeply profound challenges: the opioid epidemic, the rapid reemergence of methamphetamines and cocaine, and people with mental illness, all of which can create high rates of contact with first responders, and in the case of illicit drugs with law enforcement in particular. Responding to these complex issues law enforcement has been repeatedly called upon to be part of the response to behavioral health issues, an area outside of their primary mission and training. With CIDaDS, however, first responders will now have best path approach that allows them to get the person quickly handed-off to treatment and then move on to their next call." said Jac Charlier, PTACC co-founder.

"Every person deserves to have access to behavioral health care without contact with the criminal justice system, which includes law enforcement," said Amy Watson of CIT International. "Community-based services need to be available so that community members can turn to those services that are independent of law enforcement first and only turn to law enforcement when warranted."

Starting in January 2020, CIT International and PTACC will take CIDaTS from concept to practice through the development of a series of CIDaTS Implementation Briefs to support communities wanting to develop CIT programs and substance use disorder deflection strategies simultaneously. By fall 2021, the first CIDaTS communities will be identified.

"Unlike existing approaches that falsely separate mental health and drug treatment responses, as well as crisis and non-crisis responses, CIDaTS will provide the best path response to these challenges that

will lean heavily on early, pre-crisis, preventive approaches,” added PTACC Founding Member Leslie Balonick.

Ron Bruno, CIT International Board of Directors said “The purpose of this approach is to lower the barriers that stop people from being able to rapidly access much needed treatment for these two common behavioral health challenges, especially for those who also have frequent contact with the justice system. When the person is ready, the treatment needs to be ready too.”

CIT International, Inc. is a nonprofit membership organization whose primary purpose is to facilitate understanding, development, and implementation of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) programs. CIT programs are collaborative efforts to create and sustain more effective interactions among law enforcement, mental health care providers, individuals with mental illnesses, their families, and communities; to build comprehensive mental health crisis response systems that reduce the role of law enforcement; and to reduce the stigma of mental illness. The website is: www.citinternational.org

The Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative (PTACC) is an alliance of practitioners in law enforcement, behavioral health, community, advocacy, research, and public policy, whose mission is to strategically widen community behavioral health and social service options available through law enforcement diversion. The purpose of the Collaborative is to provide vision, leadership, advocacy, and education to facilitate the practice of pre-arrest diversion across the United States. *PTACC is the national voice of the pre-arrest diversion and deflection field.* The website is: www.ptaccollaborative.org

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