



Media Alert

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BENNY N. NAPOLEON
Sheriff

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SHERIFF BENNY N. NAPOLEON HONORED FOR EFFORTS IN ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND INCARCERATION

Detroit (December 2, 2009) – On Friday, December 4, 2009, Sheriff Benny N. Napoleon will be awarded the **Mental Health Advocate Award** by Detroit Central City. For years, Sheriff Napoleon has worked to raise awareness about mental health issues within inmate populations and develop options for those requiring treatment. Nationally, it is estimated that 25 percent of inmates exhibit signs of mental distress requiring treatment. However, upon reviewing the issue with Chiefs in charge the Wayne County jails—and based on their experience—Sheriff Napoleon has been advised that figure may be closer to 70 percent.

“It is vital that we, as leaders in law enforcement, take a proactive stand in addressing the mental health needs of prisoners,” said Sheriff Napoleon. **“We’re spending more and more each year to incarcerate individuals for actions that often stem from their psychiatric distress. These individuals have families who want to see them get treated, not head down a long road within the justice system. As members of law enforcement we certainly don’t want to see anyone behind bars who may be better served getting effective preventive or post-incarceration treatment elsewhere.”**

Costs of housing and feeding inmates are estimated at \$31,325 a year, averaging \$200 a year for Michigan taxpayers. But, if an inmate’s mental condition is immediately evaluated and treatment programs are put in place that costs goes down to just over \$10,000 a year for a parolee in a mental health treatment program. Sheriff Napoleon is committed to working with area agencies to find a solution to this growing problem. Details on Friday’s events are as follows:

- What:** Detroit Central City Community Mental Health Inc.
Annual Meeting Themed **“A Strong Rope is Made of Small Threads”**
- Where:** Offices of Miller Canfield, 150 West Jefferson, Downtown Detroit
- When:** 6:00 pm Meet and Greet
6:30 pm Program/Presentation

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