

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR

WESTON WAMP

For Immediate Release

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Under Mayor Wamp, Sheriff Garrett's Leadership, FUSE Initiative Supporting Highest Number of Individuals Since Program's Inception

Initiative transferred from Sheriff's Office to the County's Department of Economic and Community Development

The Hamilton County Commission today approved the transfer of the FUSE (Frequent User Systems Engagement) Initiative from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office to the Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD) to best coordinate efforts across county government in addressing the mental health crisis in our community.

FUSE supports individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, who are the highest users of emergency rooms, jails, and other costly crisis services, break the cycle of homelessness and re-engage with their community.

Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp appointed Alexa LeBoeuf Director of ECD, and in this role she worked with Meg Webb, formerly of the Sheriff's Office, to support the success of the project. Webb's efforts have led to exponential growth and have demonstrated the potential the program has to improve the lives of its participants and decrease costs to the public.

"Our new leadership has bolstered FUSE into a thriving initiative that is currently changing the course of more than 30 individuals' lives," said **Mayor Wamp**. "With a renewed focus, our aim is to reduce recidivism by connecting participants with mental health treatment and meaningful employment, ultimately saving taxpayer dollars."

"The Hamilton County Sheriff's Office is proud to have launched this initiative and overseen the operations since 2018. We have successfully led this program serving 31 clients and now is the opportune time to hand it off to another department whose resources expand beyond our capabilities as a law enforcement agency," said **Sheriff Austin Garrett**. "We will remain intimately involved in the program and are encouraged by the redefined focus of the project."

During a recent commission meeting, Commissioner David Sharpe praised Mayor Wamp saying "I applaud the mayor for taking this into his office" and "I'm really encouraged by the progress that this program is making."

"We are excited to see that the hard work of our FUSE team is already leading to decreased costs to our health and criminal justice systems," said **Director LeBoeuf**. "Deputy Director Webb and her team have demonstrated that we can manage complex, high impact programs in Hamilton County, and we look forward to continued successes in this program as well as pursuing future opportunities to better serve our county."

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