



**NASSAU COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
96135 Nassau Place, Suite 1  
Yulee, Florida 32097

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JOHN A. CRAWFORD  
Ex-Officio Clerk

MICHAEL S. MULLIN  
County Attorney/County Manager

February 25, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, please accept this letter of support for Starting Point Behavioral Health's legislative appropriation request of \$500,000 this session to renovate and expand the *only* behavioral health facility in western Nassau County. This renovation will not only increase behavioral health service capacity but also add conference space with video conferencing capabilities which will be available to all members of the community. This type of resource does not currently exist anywhere in western Nassau County.

Renovation to this 38 year-old structure will improve access to the 70 West Nassau residents that are using it daily and expand capacity to see those that are currently driving 20 miles each way to be seen in Starting Point's Yulee location. West Nassau is a federally-designated Health Professional Shortage area where death rates due to overdose, poisoning, and suicide are still higher in comparison to neighboring counties. This renovation will fulfill an unmet need by providing essential and lifesaving services to Floridians without adequate access to care. There will also be an addition of outdoor facilities to promote and increase exercise and wellness activities.

The largest benefit of this project is the increase in access to care that Tele-psychiatry provides. The 2015-2018 Partnership for a Healthier Nassau Cohort identified access to care, behavioral health services, and transportation as priority health issues for Nassau County. The addition of Tele-Psychiatry services will not only address all the identified needs described; it has also been shown to improve access, affordability, and provide quality care for rural providers and patients with mental illness. In addition, states have seen decreased readmissions to the hospitals, decreased ER visits, and clients reported decrease travel time and travel expense and increased patient satisfaction.

**(904) 530-6010 or (866)-474-1446**

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We feel that this project is strongly aligned with Nassau County's mission to enhance the quality of life and provide for the well-being of its citizens and the environment. We humbly ask you to support this legislative request. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin M. Taylor, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners