Pursuant to the Court Approved Settlement Agreement (“CASA”) in *U.S. v. The City of Albuquerque*, the Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) was created to “assist in identifying and developing solutions and interventions that are designed to lead to improved outcomes for individuals perceived to be or actually suffering from mental illness or experiencing a mental health crisis.” *See* Second Amended and Restated Court-Approved Settlement Agreement [Doc. 465-1], ¶ 111 (July 30, 2019). Additionally, it is the responsibility of MHRAC to “analyze and recommend appropriate changes to policies, procedures, and training methods regarding police contact with individuals with mental illness.” *Id*.

Since MHRAC’s last annual report, the Committee has been incredibly active in engaging with stakeholders and the City of Albuquerque (“CABQ”) to fulfill the Court’s purposes for Committee under the CASA. Discussions at MHRAC have been fruitful and the feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. This is despite the administrative challenges that came with a transition of MHRAC leadership at the start of 2022, which could not have been successful without the support of dedicated MHRAC members. Credit is also due to the support rendered by the parties to the CASA who believe in the importance of MHRAC to help improve outcomes. MHRAC is grateful for the parties and the Court’s continued interest in the success of MHRAC.

MHRAC is happy to report to the Court that relationships with CABQ have improved overall for the purpose of collaboration and inter-departmental coordination. The effort to get to this point has not been without its challenges, however, and some concerns remain to be worked out in 2023. It was an early success of 2022 for MHRAC to establish stronger lines of communication with the city’s relatively new department, the Albuquerque Safety Department (ACS), and in fact creating MHRAC membership space for ACS. While the connection with ACS improved, it did not go without notice that MHRAC was missing vital collaboration with CABQ on issues affecting those experiencing homelessness.

Most troubling, here, was the lack of involvement MHRAC had with the Mayor’s decision to remove encampments at Coronado Park. MHRAC has repeatedly sought involvement on issues such as Coronado Park, well before 2022. Prior to the encampment sweep of Coronado Park, MHRAC co-chair, Max Kauffman, alerted counsel for CABQ of MHRAC’s desire to be involved in the process to support the City in making the process as successful as it could be. Counsel for CABQ declined to respond and the encampment sweep proceeded unexpectedly without the critical input MHRAC was willing to offer. Although this was incredibly disappointing and damaging, MHRAC does recognize the subsequent efforts of the Family and Community Services Department Director, Carol Pierce, to attend MHRAC and offer the department’s intention to work more closely with CABQ. Additionally, the department’s Deputy Director of Homeless Solutions, Elizabeth Holguin, has been instrumental in helping to keep MHRAC at the table of decisions related to chronic homelessness. MHRAC sincerely hopes the dialogue on the pertinent issues continues to go in this positive direction, but the rebuffing of MHRAC’s efforts to engage in the Coronado Park sweep remains a concern with respect to future decisions.

MHRAC continues to enjoy a productive relationship with APD, and CIU in particular. It is incredibly encouraging that APD has utilized MHRAC to workshop difficult issues officers come across in the community, and consider the feedback MHRAC gives. MHRAC believes this is exemplary of how reform happens in a productive and respectful manner. However, MHRAC is far from its potential to assist APD in reform efforts. Both fatal and non-fatal uses of force continue to occur in circumstances involving a behavioral health crisis. At a Status Conference the Court held on October 5, 2022, MHRAC alerted the Court and parties that it appears MHRAC is missing crucial data to interpret trends and outcomes of such uses of force—which appear to happen outside of CIU. Since then, APD has committed to supplying MHRAC with this data so MHRAC can deliver more targeted advice to improve outcomes. This too is encouraging and commendable.

Looking forward to the coming year, MHRAC will seek to improve its process and impact. The focus for MHRAC needs to continue to be on the recruitment of active participants and the establishment of current bylaws acceptable to CABQ for a congruent codification into the City Ordinance. MHRAC will also build on the success of publishing policy feedback and will continue to improve transparency for the public on the policy review process. In the coming year, MHRAC will work to detail the process for feedback to CABQ policies pertaining to the CASA on its website. MHRAC will continue to seek guidance and support from CABQ to see that MHRAC becomes a permanent fixture beyond the life of the CASA.

MHRAC thanks the Court and the parties for the time and attention to this, and MHRAC hopes to report on its continued success in the coming reporting periods.

Respectfully Submitted,