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To: Whom It May Concern

From: J. Gwen Kennedy, Ph.D.

Date: March 9, 2020

Re: Letter of Reference for Retired Lt. Tom Dunn

Over the past five years I have had the pleasure of working with Tom Dunn as a driving force within the Mat-Su CIT Coalition. The CIT Coalition is a grass-roots collaboration among First Responders in the Mat-Su Borough coming together to develop partnership, provide training, and explore additional solutions for individuals in crisis with mental illness or addiction disorders beyond the criminal justice system. Tom Dunn was there from the start and has helped solidify the participation of state and local law enforcement, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, mental health providers, and family advocates. His many leadership accomplishments included the following.

- Alaska State Trooper (AST) Lt. Tom Dunn was one of the first to reach out and improve communications and working relationships with the Emergency Department staff. When in the past, law enforcement officers would simply drop off patients exhibiting mental health issues, Tom ensured that they now provide written and verbal reports on observed behaviors providing a smoother transition for the individual and helping ED staff make a quicker and more accurate diagnosis.
- Tom has led many a robust conversation with his fellow law enforcement leaders to find ways to both promote the first responder's safety and the safety of the individual in a mental health crisis. He speaks with passion and clear thinking, acknowledging other's concerns and finding ways to build alignment.
- Early on, Tom became a trainer in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and then ensured all his staff received training in the 8-hours course. He co-taught classes for EMS. Then he expanded his focus and delivery to Community Councils, the Mat-Su schools, and spouses of law enforcement officers. He advocated for MHFA training to become an

integral part of the AST Sitka Academy, ensuring all new recruits received MHFA training. As most local law enforcement officers also attend the Sitka Academy as new hires, this effort spans local and state law enforcement.

- In addition to the 8-hour MHFA training, Tom has lead participation in the 40-hour Mat-Su CIT Academy, now recruiting for its fourth cohort. Tom ensured AST participation, helping to build skills, knowledge, and relationships with other first responders. Working with local and state funders, Tom strategized on how to deliver the Academy and refresher training state-wide. The goal has been to create a pool of trained first responders who can assist in a crisis situation. As an additional result, the training has strengthened the mental health of first responders and created stronger peer support.
- Within his own organization, he has helped the AST Mat-Su Attachment set the standard of excellence for first responders with respect to the treatment of individuals with mental illness. He worked with staff to create CIT Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to serve as the gold standard locally and state-wide.
- To help argue the case for sustainable funding for training, Tom co-designed and shepherded the implementation of a data gathering process to assess the impact of training. He and his staff continue to encourage their peer organizations to participate. Four organizations and the University of Alaska now participate in the data sharing agreement.
- Tom has also participated in several public presentations and public testimony to share the work of the CIT Coalition and to advocate for changes in the system.

Yet the most impressive accomplishment is his ability to engage new leadership and ownership in the CIT Coalition. Together the first responders and behavior health providers are addressing system-wide problems and building a better first responder system. Tom has been an instrumental part in creating a sustainable effort. He is a passionate, strategic and practical leader.

If you would like any further information, you may call me at 907-317-4562. I look forward to hearing what is next for Tom.