



MEMORANDUM

City Manager's Office

DATE: February 24, 2022

TO: Public Safety Advisory Board

FROM: Audrey Seymour Ramberg, Assistant City Manager/
Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: Update on Mental Health Crisis Response Programs and Initiatives

PURPOSE

Receive an update on existing and alternative mental health crisis response programs and appoint a subcommittee of the Public Safety Advisory Board to identify opportunities to engage the community and provide input on these programs.

BACKGROUND

The Public Safety Advisory Board (PSAB) Fiscal Year 2021-22 Work Plan, adopted by the City Council on September 28, 2021, includes a project to explore existing and alternative responses to mental health crises. Prior to this, at its August 26, 2021 meeting, the PSAB received an update from the County of Santa Clara regarding County mental health crisis response models and from the Mountain View Police Department (MVPD) regarding the work of the MVPD's Behavioral Services Unit (BSU).

DISCUSSION

Update on Mental Health Crisis Response Programs

A brief summary and update on the County programs—the existing Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) and a new community-based pilot, currently being developed, called TRUST (Trusted Response Urgent Support Team)—and the MVPD BSU are below.

Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT)

The MCRT provides crisis screening (by telephone), assessment and intervention (in the field), as well as referral to other supportive services. The service was implemented by the County in 2018 to provide an alternative to police response to mental health crises to

achieve deescalation during the crisis situation, referrals to appropriate levels of behavioral health care, and prevention of criminal justice system engagement.

MCRT is considered an intermediate level of care in which behavioral health clinicians work with law enforcement liaisons to respond to calls to the County Behavioral Health Services Department Call Center. Calls can be placed by law enforcement or directly by members of the community. Community awareness of this resource is not widespread, and there are capacity constraints to provide timely 24/7 response throughout the County. This has become more challenging over the last two years as calls have increased substantially, and it has been necessary to triage field visits for the most urgent requests.

MCRT services for youth are provided through a contract with Uplift Family Services, a nonprofit organization with offices in Campbell, Los Gatos, and San Jose. Services for adults are provided by County staff, operating in three teams, who are based in Central and South County.

On January 25, 2022, the County Board of Supervisors approved a referral from Supervisor Joe Simitian to County staff to bring options to the Board for creating a new, dedicated team in the North County/West Valley region to serve adults and to explore options to expand mobile crisis response for youth, aged 16 to 24. The first of these two referrals returned to the Board on February 8, 2022, at which point the Board approved an appropriation for dedicated MCRT staff in North County/West Valley. County staff expects to have the positions filled and operational by July 2022. The City of Mountain View provided a support letter to the County for this much-needed expansion of resources available to our residents and will collaborate with the County on the siting and launch of the new team.

Additional Board action is anticipated in April 2022 related to a \$2,000,000 Department of Health Care Services grant to integrate and expand mobile services for children, youth, families, and adults. This is expected to include expansion of the County's contract with Uplift Family Services to provide services up to age 21.

Trusted Response Urgent Support Team (TRUST)

As reported to the PSAB at its August 26, 2021 meeting, the County is developing a Community Mobile Response (CMR) pilot program that will use community residents, mental health workers, and emergency medical services providers to respond to needs and crises in the community, ensuring more individuals and families have access to mental health and crisis services without involving law enforcement. This community-based response is anticipated to encourage calls for assistance from those who may have historical trauma involving police and reduce unnecessary hospitalization or

incarceration. The intent is to have this program broadly used by the community, which will require extensive community engagement efforts. The pilot will operate in three geographic areas: San Jose, Gilroy, and North County (with a focus on Mountain View, Sunnyvale, and Santa Clara).

Following a community engagement process seeking input, the program has been named TRUST, which stands for Trusted Response Urgent Response Team. As presented to the PSAB on August 26, key elements of the TRUST program are below:

- Family involvement—encouraging family in all aspects of the process, from the phone screening, to riding along, and to the hospital admission.
- Prevention focused—focus on lower acuity situations and diversion, as well as providing resources pre- and post-crisis response.
- Access through a trusted community phone line.
- Transformed trauma-informed mobile response vehicle, designed through community input, including those with lived experience, with the assistance of a professional design and marketing firm.
- Community Collaborators—build a mechanism to receive continuing feedback from the community on the project.

The County has conducted a Request for Proposals process to select providers of services for the TRUST program and is in the process of developing service contracts for ultimate Board of Supervisors approval. County staff anticipates executing these contracts by July 2022 and ramping up service within three months of contract execution.

MVPD Behavioral Services Unit

In April 2021, the MVPD launched a pilot program to reduce the frequency of police contact with people suffering from mental health crisis by refocusing the efforts of an existing crisis team. Team members receive a minimum of 80 hours of specialized crisis training and are available across all shifts for a formalized response to crisis. A full-time Community Services Officer, who is an Associate Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor/Marriage and Family Therapist, is assigned to respond with the team as appropriate and to review incidents and reports to identify opportunities to follow up and provide additional assistance and access to resources that may help prevent a cycle of continued crisis. Since the start of this program, 751 cases have been referred to the team, and 177 residents have engaged in services.

In addition, the MVPD has a dedicated Officer assigned to work with vulnerable residents in Mountain View, using an approach based on relationship-building and compassion to help identify and address individual and community needs. This Officer is part of the Youth and Community Unit, which has recently been restructured to join together the Neighborhood and Events Unit and the Youth Services Unit under one Sergeant. Many of those who are served by this Officer are unhoused or unstably housed and/or are experiencing crisis or mental health challenges. This community-based unit provides a valuable alternative to traditional law enforcement approaches.

Next Steps for PSAB Work Plan Item on Mental Health Crisis Response

Staff recommends that the PSAB create a subcommittee to identify opportunities to engage the public and provide input on existing and alternative mental health response programs in Mountain View. The work of the subcommittee could include:

- Reviewing information regarding mental health crisis calls in Mountain View and how those calls are currently handled;
- Monitoring the development of the County's efforts to expand MCRT, launch TRUST in North County, and the progress of the MVPD BSU program;
- Identifying opportunities for community and PSAB input into these programs and developing suggestions for seeking community input;
- Developing suggestions for building community awareness about MCRT and TRUST; and
- Bringing updates and recommendations to the PSAB for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Public Safety Advisory Board receive the update on existing and alternative mental health crisis response programs and appoint a subcommittee of the Public Safety Advisory Board to identify opportunities to engage the community and provide input on these programs.

ASR/HM/4/MGR

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