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April 5, 2022

BPC 22-043

The Honorable Public Safety Committee
City of Los Angeles
c/o City Clerk's Office
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: RESPONSE TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE'S FOLLOW-UP RESEARCH REQUEST
REGARDING THE UNARMED MODEL OF CRISIS RESPONSE

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, April 5, 2022, the Board APPROVED the Department's report relative to the above matter.

This matter is being forwarded to you for approval.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Silva".

MARIA SILVA
Commission Executive Assistant II

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

22-013
RICHARD M. TEFANK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
3/29/22
DATE
4A

RECEIVED

MAR 29 2022

POLICE COMMISSION

March 29, 2022
11.2

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: UNARMED MODEL OF CRISIS RESPONSE

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the attached report responding to the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee's follow-up research request regarding the Unarmed Model of Crisis Response.
2. That the Board TRANSMITS this report to the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee.

DISCUSSION

Attached is the Los Angeles Police Department's analysis of the Crisis and Incident Response through the Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE) pilot program, the Call Direction to Ensure Suicide Safety (CRESS) pilot with Didi Hirsch, and other unarmed emergency response programs. This analysis includes lessons learned and best practices from these programs that can be integrated into the Unarmed Crisis Response program.

If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact Assistant Chief Robert E. Marino, Director, Office of Operations, at (213) 486-0111.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

**BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Approved *April 5, 2022*
Secretary *Maria Silva*

Attachment

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT



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Chief of Police

ERIC GARCETTI
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March 29, 2022

The Honorable Public Safety Committee
Office of the City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, California 90012

Honorable Committee Members:

On September 15, 2021, City Council adopted the amended Public Safety Committee report (Council File No. 20-0769). The Committee requested that the Department conduct an analysis of the Crisis and Incident Response through the Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE) pilot program, the Call Direction to Ensure Suicide Safety (CRESS) pilot with Didi Hirsch, and any other unarmed emergency response programs to identify lessons learned and best practices which can be integrated into the Unarmed Crisis Response program.

Analysis of Unarmed Response Models

A collaboration with several City entities, to include the Mayor's Unified Homelessness Response Center (UHRC) and the offices of the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), resulted in a complete analysis of identified unarmed emergency response models. The analysis is consolidated and outlined as follows.

Crisis and Incident Response through Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE) Pilot Program

The Mayor's Office identified the service provider for the CIRCLE Pilot program as Urban Alchemy. The full CIRCLE pilot program, including the integration of diverted calls from the emergency communications center, launched at the end of January 2022. The Mayor's Office, Urban Alchemy, and the Department's Communications Division personnel worked closely to make the necessary revisions to enable the diversion of calls for service.

The CIRCLE pilot program provides an alternative response to non-emergency calls for service involving persons experiencing homelessness (PEH) in the Hollywood and Venice (Pacific Area) communities. The Hollywood pilot area is comprised of an east/west zone from Sierra Bonita Avenue to the west and the Hollywood Freeway to the east, and Franklin Avenue on the north to Fountain Avenue on the south. The Venice pilot area is located in the northwestern portion of Pacific Area, running from the beach to Walgrove Avenue on the east, and Dewey Street on the north to Venice Boulevard on the south. The crisis response teams are available on a 24-hour basis, seven days per week, to respond to PEH-related non-emergency calls diverted from the Department's emergency communication center and the Department's non-emergency number.

Due to the alarming rise in COVID-19 cases, CIRCLE proactively launched embedded teams in July 2021, to respond during the COVID-19 emergency. The segmenting of the program served to launch the teams quickly, expediting the process under the City's COVID-19 Emergency Declaration. Emergency-embedded COVID-19 response teams are deployed in the community seven days per week to conduct outreach to PEH regarding COVID-19. The outreach includes distribution of personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, COVID-19 prevention and vaccination education, custodial/sanitation services, hygiene promotion, coordination with City's mobile vaccination program, and referrals to service providers.

Since the full pilot program began, proactive embedded response teams were deployed in the two pilot locations identified as having a critical need for the program. The teams are building a rapport with the PEH community, conducting light sanitation work, and generating referrals to local service providers. The CIRCLE response staff is not armed, nor do they perform any law enforcement duties, but instead focus on providing services to the PEH community.

Call Direction to Ensure Suicide Safety (CRESS) pilot with Didi Hirsch

In consideration of the ongoing mental health crisis and the critical need for an unarmed response model, the Department has partnered with Didi Hirsch to facilitate the response to the needs of persons suffering from mental illness.

The pilot program was launched in February 2021, and currently operates on a 24-hour basis. This call-diversion pilot program initiates with a dispatch operator assessing if a call can be categorized as a non-imminent suicide or behavioral health related call. If the call meets the criteria and the caller consents, they can be transferred to a Mental Health Crisis Counselor or Suicide Prevention Counselor at the Didi Hirsch Mental Health Crisis Call Center. The counselor works with the caller to discern the appropriate resources needed, rather than dispatching a patrol unit. However, if the counselor believes police intervention is necessary, they immediately notify the Dispatch Operator.

From the inception of Didi Hirsch on February 2, 2021, through the end of the calendar year for 2021, there were 1,465 calls for service diverted to Didi Hirsch. Recently, from January 1, 2022, through February 19, 2022, there 251 calls for service diverted to Didi Hirsch. The emergency communications center recorded the highest volume in July 2021, with 273 diverted calls for service, and the lowest volume in March 2021, with 60 calls for service. In the breakdown of call volume by hour, calls mainly occur between 4pm to 5pm, and are least likely to occur between 4am to 5am.

The calls for service are broken into two categories: "Facilitated Rescue" and "Non-Facilitated Rescue." A "Facilitated Rescue" means that during the call, the service provider spoke to the caller and was able to provide some stabilization but still determined response to an emergency room, reconnection to Department Communications, or another form of psychiatric medical response was needed. The Service Provider would then remain on the line and assist in facilitating a call to the correct Service Provider or connect the caller back with Communications. The "Non-Facilitated Rescue" category accounts for calls in which the Service Provider can provide stabilization, and the caller decides on their own to pursue services.

The analysis of this program has revealed that a call diversion program for suicide and mental health calls redirected from the Department to the appropriate non-law enforcement service provider can result in a positive outcome. The Didi Hirsch Call Center staff do not perform any law enforcement duties; instead, they provide services via the telephone or redirect the caller to the proper service needed.

Therapeutic Van Pilot Program

Due to the City's continuing efforts to attain a network of unarmed response models, the CAO's staff provided information regarding the Therapeutic Van pilot program, operated by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH).

In 2019, LAFD received approval to conduct a one-year pilot program to provide patients experiencing a mental health emergency with an alternative response. The program offers immediate treatment by mobile mental health professionals from DMH and transportation to a Mental Health Urgent Care Facility instead of an emergency room. Assigned DMH workers complete a Mental Health Medical Clearance Criteria Form with several questions pertaining to the patient's injuries, medical issues, and demeanor. If the patient does not meet the criteria, then the DMH workers can contact LAFD and have a rescue ambulance respond. Conversely, if LAFD finds the patient meets the criteria for the Therapeutic Van transport, they are able to contact DMH and have an available van dispatched.

This ongoing working relationship relieves the strain on emergency services while ensuring community members still receive quality care and resources. Following the approval of another year of the pilot program, LAFD plans on providing necessary training for the members assigned to the Therapeutic Vans, in continuance of the program. The Therapeutic Van staff are not armed and do not perform any law enforcement duties; they provide services for patients experiencing mental health emergencies.

Crisis Assistance Helping Out on The Streets (CAHOOTS) Program

The most prominent and longest-running unarmed response program is CAHOOTS. The program operates out of Eugene, Oregon and was established in 1989 with start-up resources from the Eugene Police Department (EPD). The group was started by community members who wanted a service to respond to concerns that did not require police intervention.

When a community member calls the emergency dispatch center with an incident that may appropriately be diverted, the community member must agree to receive a CAHOOTS response. If the community member declines, a traditional police or fire response is still sent. Some of the CAHOOTS calls are a joint response, or CAHOOTS is requested to a police or fire call after it is determined their services are a better match to resolve the situation.

Currently, CAHOOTS operates on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week, to provide a mobile response unit to certain non-violent, non-criminal community requests. The CAHOOTS calls for service criteria are as follows:

- Persons who are intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance;
- Persons needing non-medical care or treatment for mental illness;
- Persons in need of immediate shelter;
- Persons who need first aid, chronic care, basic life support; or,
- Requests by the police department for CAHOOTS for one of the services offered.

According to EPD's analysis of CAHOOTS for 2019 statistics, approximately 5-8 percent of calls for service were diverted to CAHOOTS. The CAHOOTS program received 18,583 calls for service for the year, and of those calls, 13,854 were handled solely by CAHOOTS and required no law enforcement response. Statistics obtained from CAHOOTS indicate that 60 percent of those served by their program are homeless and 30 percent are diagnosed as having severe or persistent mental illness.

The CAHOOTS staff are not armed and do not perform any law enforcement duties. Requests for service that involve a crime, a potentially hostile person, a potentially dangerous situation, or an emergency medical problem may not be diverted to CAHOOTS; instead these types of requests continue to be dispatched to the proper emergency services.

Best Practices

The assessment of each of these models and their operations sheds light on specific aspects that should be considered when instituting an unarmed crisis response program for the City of Los Angeles. Many of the programs currently being used are based on CAHOOTS, or attributes of the program that were implemented into response models. It is recommended that upon creation of a response model, the following best practices should be considered.

Community Rapport and Education

Rapport building with members of the PEH community is part of the model for the CIRCLE pilot. By launching an educational campaign prior to the start of an unarmed crisis response effort, the public will have knowledge of the service and how it may benefit them and their community. Gaining and fortifying the trust of people in the community via assistance of a program remains the overriding goal of these efforts.

Recognizability

Part of the education piece should include identifiable clothing or emblems that the service providers will wear and identifiable vehicles that will be utilized. Being recognizable to the public will assist with the strain on emergency services and Communications. For example, the CAHOOTS program is recognizable enough to the public that they receive a significant number of "citizen flag downs." This speaks to the trust the community has in the CAHOOTS program and resources offered. When a call is diverted via Communications from police response, the operator should provide the caller with a description of the service provider responding.

Call Specific/Safety Net

It is paramount that an unarmed crisis response team and law enforcement are fully aware of the types of calls for service that the program handles. The safety of the unarmed responders can be compromised if a call is coded incorrectly or they respond to a call that requires police.

A co-response model, such as the Department's Mental Evaluation Unit, benefits from having both an unarmed clinician and a police officer. The EPD provides backup for some calls where CAHOOTS is the only unit initially assigned. It should be noted that back-up rates for more traditional CAHOOTS calls (transports, welfare checks, and public assistance) are relatively low. When CAHOOTS is dispatched to a call that would traditionally warrant police response, i.e., trespass, the instances of CAHOOTS requiring back-up from the police increase significantly.

Joint Training

The service provider and the associated emergency response service should remain flexible and have a good working relationship. Joint training such as that seen in the Therapeutic Van pilot, would ensure open lines of communication between the entities. It would also guarantee that there is consistency across the involved organizations, which would translate into appropriate service provided. Any training materials created for the program should be distributed to all of those involved, to avoid any miscommunication pertaining to the operation. Educational information, including quick reference guides, mock scenarios, and standard operating procedures, would assist in creating a cohesive and consistent program.

Fluidity of the Program

In creating the standard operating procedure for an unarmed response model, the ability to remain dynamic will create wider utility of these services. If police officers respond to a call suitable for an unarmed response, upon confirming there is no threat, they should be able to request alternative services and resume patrol duties. A fluid model of response would allow for a neutral situation to be handled by the unarmed responders and enable police officers to remain available for handling calls not appropriate for unarmed response. The service providers should be trained to recognize when their response to a situation would be unsafe and police assistance is needed. The correct classification of these calls and the dispatched response of proper resources will rely heavily on Communications personnel. If the Department retains a network of these unarmed response programs, it may be beneficial to create a flow chart for the dispatch operators to use in assessing appropriate response.

Call Diversion

Utilizing the existing structure of the dispatch and communications system allows for more expeditious implementation of call diversion. As seen in the Didi Hirsch pilot, call diversion is useful in rendering immediate care for citizens experiencing mental health emergencies. The CAHOOTS teams are dispatched via the same system utilized by EPD and Eugene Springfield Fire; this dispatch system diverts CAHOOTS calls from EPD and other service providers. The ability to dispatch unarmed responses from Communications allows for response teams to handle a subset of calls that would not typically warrant immediate police response. Such calls could include found property, loud parties, and traffic collisions without injuries. It is suggested that calls allocated to these unarmed resources receive a unique incident number distinguishing them from Departmental incidents. This would also assist in data compilation regarding the number of calls diverted from traditional response.

Data Compilation and Analysis

The measurement of success for these unarmed response models would be quantified via response-data collected, as compared to prior year(s). The compilation of this data will identify where the successes and shortcomings of these programs exist. It is crucial that both the service provider(s) and the Department are consistent in their data collection and all entities involved are aware of the metrics.

When reporting numbers to the media, the CAHOOTS program had been reporting calls diverted to them at a much higher rate than what was actually diverted away from EPD. This miscommunication was the result of numbers being improperly catalogued by CAHOOTS. Proper data compilation and analysis will justify the use of these services and help establish milestones and goals for the future of unarmed response.

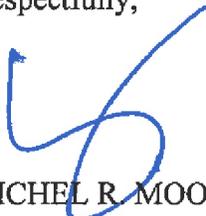
In conclusion, an unarmed model of crisis response would ensure that community members in the City of Los Angeles receive more well-rounded and comprehensive services to fulfill their diverse needs. This concept would also allow for LAFD and the Department to streamline their operations and provide more efficient emergency services to the City.

Community Online Reporting Service (CORS)

The CORS system allows community to file reports online, which typically would have generated a police response. An analysis of 2019, 2020 and 2021 (year-to-date) reporting data revealed that in 2019, a net total of 11,826 reports were filed online. There was an increase of reports filed online in 2020 to 19,613 reports, while there was a marked increase to 55,852 reports filed online in 2021. This reflects an increased awareness of the online reporting option for the community, as well as the Department allowing more reports to be filed online. While these numbers do not correlate precisely to the unarmed response models depicted herein, they do illustrate the availability of an additional form of “response” which serves to mitigate the strain that would otherwise be placed upon the unarmed response teams and police alike. In light of the planned expansion of categories reportable online via CORS, this option could also be considered as an avenue for minimizing police response.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Evaluation and Administration Unit, Office of Operations, at (213) 486-6050.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police