

LOS ANGELES POLICE COMMISSION

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July 28, 2021

BPC 21-135

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 COUNCIL MOTION FILE NO. 20-0780 REGARDING MENTAL
EVALUATION UNIT AND ITS SYSTEMWIDE MENTAL ASSESSMENT RESPONSE
TEAMS.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, July 27, 2021, 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

July 23, 2021
8.2

RECEIVED
JUL 22 2021
POLICE COMMISSION

TO: Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

REVIEWED BY: *Mohamed*

RICHARD M. TEFANK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DATE
7/22/21

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION, FILE NO. 20-0780

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. It is recommended that the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and ACCEPT the attached response to the Public Safety Committee regarding the resources needed to expand the Department's Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) and its Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Teams (SMART).
2. It is recommended that the Board TRANSMIT to the Public Safety Committee the attached response.

DISCUSSION

On March 3, 2021, the Board's Public Safety Committee considered a Motion regarding resources needed to expand the Los Angeles Police Department's MEU and SMART. The Los Angeles Police Department's Detective Support and Vice Division has prepared the attached report as directed.

If you have any questions, please contact Captain Brian Bixler, Commanding Officer, Detective Support and Vice Division, at (213) 486-0910.

Respectfully,


MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

**BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**

Approved By
Secretary

July 27, 2021
Maria Silva

Attachments

AGENDA DATE: JULY 27, 2021

OPEN SESSION

3C

DEPARTMENT'S REPORT dated July 23, 2021, relative to Council Motion File No. 20-0780 Mental Evaluation Unit and its Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Teams, as set forth. [\[BPC# 21-135\]](#)

Recommendation(s) for Board action:

APPROVE the Department's report and TRANSMIT to Public Safety Committee.

Moved by Commissioner Decker, seconded by Commissioner Briggs to APPROVE the Department's report and TRANSMIT to Public Safety Committee with instruction to the Department to work with the Executive Director and report back on all calls that are being diverted and all the diversion programs as well as the broader strategic efforts inworking with the County and Federal systems to get resources and prioritize what is available and what should be priority asks of each branch of government in this area.

Unanimously adopted by a vote of 5/0.

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

July 7, 2021

1.8

TO: Chief of Police

FROM: Chief of Detectives

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION, FILE NO. 20-0780

Attached for your approval and signature is an Interdepartmental Correspondence addressed to the Board of Police Commissioners and a corresponding fact sheet, responding to the Los Angeles City Council Public Safety Committee's (PSC) request stemming from Council File No. 20-0780.

In the attached fact sheet, Detective Support and Vice Division addressed the following request stemming from PSC's motion:

1. The report regarding resources needed to expand the LAPD's Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) and Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) in order to ensure that police officers in the field can call SMART or other MEU resources anytime there may be a need.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact Detective Bureau at (213) 486-7000.

Respectfully,



KRISE E. FITCHER, Deputy Chief
Chief of Detectives

Attachments

FACT SHEET

MEU and SMART Expansion (Council File #20-0780) Los Angeles Police Department Mental Evaluation Unit

Purpose. At the request of the City Council, the Department generated a report regarding resources needed to expand the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART), to ensure patrol officers can request SMART resources whenever needed. This Fact Sheet addresses the additional resources required to expand MEU SMART on a 24/7 basis to support patrol and respond to all SMART requests, in reference to Council File No. 20-0780.

BODY

- **Analyze past and current MEU/SMART requests in conjunction with the current number of personnel at MEU/SMART**

The following calls involved an adult or juvenile in a mental health crisis who was detained and evaluated pursuant to 5150 Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) or 5585 WIC:

Year	Initial Responder	SMART Handled	% SMART Handled
2020 ¹	9,725	5,988	62%
2019	9,298	6,844	74%
2018	9,475	7,164	76%

NOTE: The above statistics represent the number of calls when patrol initially responded to a mental health-related call for service. The SMART calls handled were those in which patrol requested SMART to assist with a mental health-related radio call and SMART completed the call. These numbers do not include those instances when patrol elected not to notify the MEU Triage Desk, when patrol handled the call as a crime and did not indicate mental illness was involved, or when Communications Division dispatched the call as a crime with no mental illness nexus communicated in the comments of the call.

In 2020, in addition to the 9,725 mental health-related calls for service, Communications Division dispatched 6,502 calls for service that were not initially coded as a mental health-related call (Code 907 Suicide-Related and Code 918 Mental Illness-Related), but resulted in a mental health-related disposition code [Hospitalization Mental Illness (HOM) or Referral Mental Illness (REM)]. In 2019, Communications Division dispatched 5,995 calls for service that were not initially coded as a mental health-related call but resulted in a mental health-related disposition code.

- **Based on prior MEU/SMART requests, propose the number of personnel needed to meet the requirement to respond to all MEU/SMART requests**

¹ Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, SMART officers were reassigned to other details, significantly reducing the effectiveness of the operation.

In 2015, MEU SMART was staffed to provide 17 cars per day. To address increasing incidents involving persons experiencing mental illness, staffing needs to be restored. An expansion to 21 cars daily will require a commitment from the DMH to dedicate additional personnel to MEU. Note that one SMART unit is an officer paired with a DMH clinician.

MEU SMART model to deploy 17 units per day:

Watch	Number of Units
Day Watch	2 (Citywide)
Mid-Day Watch	6 (2 Units for Valley Bureau; 2 Units for Central Bureau; 1 unit for South Bureau; 1 Unit for West Bureau)
PM Watch	8 (2 Units per Bureau)
AM Watch	1 (Citywide)

MEU SMART requirements to deploy 17 units per day:

Grand Totals	Need	Have	Difference
Officers	71	59	12
SLOs	4	4	0
Supervisors	16	12	4
Total LAPD Personnel	91	75	16
DMH Clinicians	32	27	5

Proposed MEU SMART model to deploy 21 units per day:

Watch ²	Number of Units
Day Watch	2 (Citywide)
Mid-Day Watch	8 (2 Units for Each Bureau)
PM Watch	10 (3 Units for Valley Bureau; 3 Units for Central Bureau; 2 Units for South Bureau; 2 Units for West Bureau)
AM Watch	1 (Citywide)

Proposed MEU SMART requirements to deploy 21 units per day:

Grand Totals	Need	Have	Difference
Officers	82	59	23
SLOs	4	4	0
Supervisors	16	12	4
Total LAPD Personnel	102	75	27
DMH Clinicians	40	27	13

² Day Watch covers 0600-1600 hours, Mid-Day Watch covers 1000-2000 hours; PM Watch covers 1530-0130 hours; and AM Watch covers 2030-0630 hours.

- **Consider the financial and equipment implications (i.e. increase in overtime, paygrades, and vehicles, etc.)**

Administrative Staff / Training Unit Expansion Consideration:

Currently, the full-time duties of the Sick/IOD Coordinator, TEAMS II Coordinator, and Training Coordinator are handled by one person, with assistance from a civilian. Therefore, two additional administrative personnel are needed to properly handle the increased workload and attrition.

The expansion will require additional logistical equipment:

Tasers:

	Have	Need	Additional Need
SMART Units	20	21	1
Supervisors	0	4	4
SLOs	0	4	4
10% down for service			3
Total Additional Need			12

Vehicles:

	Have	Need	Additional Need
SMART Units	21	25	4 (1 vehicle is awaiting repair and may be salvaged)
Supervisors	7	7	0
10% down for service			2
Total Additional Need			6

Location:

Currently, MEU is housed at Police Headquarters Facility (PHF). An expansion of MEU with additional SMART sworn personnel and corresponding DMH personnel will require additional office and parking space at PHF or may necessitate that an alternate standalone facility be identified altogether.

Case Assessment Management Program (CAMP) Expansion Consideration:

It is recommended that CAMP be provided an additional two detectives to handle the added caseload. The Case Assessment Management Program teams are comprised of a Detective or Police Officer paired with a Mental Health Clinician. The core functions of CAMP are to:

- Assess and manage high risk cases involving individuals with a mental illness through linkage to mental health services
- Ensure documentation of mental health history to assist providers and the mental health court system on an appropriate treatment plan
- Collaborate with divisional and specialized detectives by providing mental health history to assist in criminal cases for mandated treatment and risk mitigation
- File criminal and civil order cases with the purposes of gaining compliance and removal of deadly means
- Engage with family and stakeholders to develop strategies to reduce risk and reach stabilization
- Complete Officer Safety Flyers and manage Special Locations to inform personnel of high-risk individuals suffering from mental illness in their Area

The 2015 expansion did not include additional personnel to CAMP. In the years following the expansion, CAMP's annual caseload increased from 888 in 2014 to 1,627 in 2020, an 83% increase. It is anticipated that a future expansion will result in a similar growth pattern. Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Teams better identify high-risk cases and effectiveness of continued follow up. The addition of more SMART teams will increase the referrals to CAMP.

The following chart shows the year to year growth of cases referred to CAMP.

Year	Total CAMP Cases	# Detectives	Avg. Annual Caseload per Detective
2021	1,860 (projected)	7	265
2020	1,627	8	203
2019	1,834	8	229
2018	1,776	7	254

Department policy requires all Tactical Disengagements involving a subject suffering from mental illness to be referred to CAMP. Due to the increase of Tactical Disengagements, it is projected that CAMP will receive an additional 250 cases this year in this category alone.

The request for Detective classification for this position is imperative due to the investigative functions of CAMP. Case Assessment Management Program investigations do not follow a linear fact pattern and often require the investigator to collaborate with numerous stakeholders, including specialized detective units such as Force Investigation Division, Major Crimes Division, Gang and Narcotics Division, and outside agencies including the District Attorney's Office, City Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Case Assessment Management Program investigators prioritize and manage caseloads, recognize patterns, develop strategies, assess and mitigate risk through various resources across, City, County and State entities.

Case Assessment Management Program approaches risk in a collaborative manner that opens the door to new long-term solutions beyond the criminal justice system.

CONCLUSION

MEU SMART is a well-established alternate response model that employs best practices in the management of calls for service involving persons who are in a mental health crisis. The current staffing and equipment limit SMART's ability to respond to all mental health crisis calls dispatched. The Department has reviewed and modified the dispatch of SMART units to reduce the response time to these calls. However, without a significant expansion of personnel, equipment, and resources to support patrol 24/7 on all SMART requests, the Department will be limited to its current capabilities.

Prepared by:
Detective Support and Vice Division

AD HOC POLICE

MOTION

The Police Department's (LAPD) Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) is one of the first and largest law enforcement-mental health co-response operations in the nation. The LAPD deploys MEU resources to the field to assist officers on calls where mental health issues are suspected, in order to ensure that police officers respond to these calls for services appropriately. However, the demand for these services means that these resources are not always available to officers in the field who need them.

The MEU has a number of subunits, including its Systematic Mental Assessment Response Teams (SMART). SMART is co-supported by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), and helps uniformed officers effectively respond to and link people in crisis to appropriate mental health services. While the City has made a significant investment in these resources, more can be done. Mental health is a factor in a number of calls fielded by LAPD, and officers responding to these calls should always have assistance from specialized units trained for these instances.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Police Department be directed to report on the resources needed to expand the Department's Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) and its System wide Mental Assessment Response Teams (SMART), in order to ensure that police officers in the field can call SMART or other MEU resources anytime there may be a need.

PRESENTED BY:



MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON
Councilmember, 8th District



CURREN D. PRICE, JR.
Councilmember, 9th District



HERB J. WESSON, JR.
Councilmember, 10th District

SECONDED BY:



for
Prin Pagan

JUN 17 2020

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