

LOS ANGELES POLICE COMMISSION

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March 4, 2021

BPC #21-038

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles, Room 395
c/o City Clerk's Office

Dear Honorable Members:

RE: CITY COUNCIL MOTION 19-1215-MENTAL EVALUATION UNIT.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, March 02, 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

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

BPC 21-038
Richard M. Tefank 2/25/21
RICHARD M. TEFANK DATE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 24, 2021
1.18

RECEIVED
FEB 25 2021
POLICE COMMISSION

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL MOTION 19-1215 – MENTAL EVALUATION UNIT

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

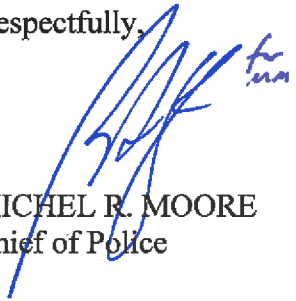
1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE this report.
2. That the Board TRANSMIT the attached report to the Los Angeles City Council.

DISCUSSION

The Los Angeles City Council directed the Los Angeles Police Department to report on the current status of the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) and its System-wide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART). The response is to include information, but not limited to: the MEU's coordination with the newly established Comprehensive Cleaning and Rapid Engagement teams; the MEU's ability to respond to calls for service, including response times as well as a breakdown of the unit's overall capabilities, and any potential staffing needs or improvements to be made so that the Department can be effective in its response to the needs of those experiencing homelessness that are also affected by mental illness.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please have a member of your staff contact Assistant Chief Horace E. Frank, Office of Special Operations, at 213-486-8440.

Respectfully,



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

Attachment

BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS
Approved March 2, 2021
Secretary Maria Silva

FACT SHEET

City Council Motion (Council File #19-1215)
Los Angeles Police Department
Mental Evaluation Unit

Purpose. At the request of the City Council, the Department generated a report on the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) co-response model. The purpose of this document is to specifically address Councilmembers John Lee and Monica Rodriguez' requests for additional information in reference to their City Council Motion, Council File #19-1215.

RESPONSES

- **The total number of calls Citywide the Department gets which are labeled as mental health problems;**

| LAPD 911 Suicide / Mental Health-Related Calls for Service | | | |
|---|--|--------------|--------------------|
| Code | Call Type | 2019 | 2020 YTD |
| 9073 | Attempt Suicide | 3864 | 3873 |
| 907A3 | Ambulance Attempt Suicide | 3497 | 3106 |
| 907P3 | Possible Attempt Suicide | 4610 | 4932 |
| 907PA3 | Ambulance Possible Attempt Suicide | 381 | 405 |
| 918AF | Ambulance Female with Mental Illness | 1299 | 1248 |
| 918AJ | Ambulance Juvenile with Mental Illness | 96 | 82 |
| 918AM | Ambulance Male with Mental Illness | 1872 | 1826 |
| 918F | Female with Mental Illness | 4299 | 4688 |
| 918J | Juvenile with Mental Illness | 806 | 778 |
| 918M | Male with Mental Illness | 7062 | 7254 |
| 918PF | Possible Female with Mental Illness | 956 | 976 |
| 918PJ | Possible Juvenile with Mental Illness | 79 | 58 |
| 918PM | Possible Male with Mental Illness | 1353 | 1315 |
| 918HF | Citizen Holding Female with Mental Illness | 24 | 26 |
| 918HJ | Citizen Holding Juvenile with Mental Illness | 9 | 14 |
| 918HM | Citizen Holding Male with Mental Illness | 22 | 24 |
| 918OF | Officer Holding Female with Mental Illness | 3 | 0 |
| 918OJ | Officer Holding Juvenile with Mental Illness | 1 | 1 |
| 918OM | Officer Holding Male with Mental Illness | 6 | 3 |
| 918VF | Violent Female with Mental Illness | 728 | 722 |
| 918VJ | Violent Juvenile with Mental Illness | 314 | 305 |
| 918VM | Violent Male with Mental Illness | 1427 | 1297 |
| | | | YTD:12/3/20 |
| Total Mental Health-Related Calls for Service | | 32708 | 32933 |

NOTE: The above statistics represent the number of calls overall coded by Communications Division, related to mental illness and suicide attempts.

- **The total number of calls Citywide the Department gets that are not labeled as mental health calls but then turn out to involve a mental health issue;**

From January 1, 2020, through December 3, 2020, Communications Division dispatched 6,459 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. 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.

- **The total number of times that the MEU or SMART personnel were actually summoned (this should be the total number of calls requesting a MEU or SMART response, whether or not it was actually handled by SMART);**

The following calls were identified as calls involving an adult or juvenile in a mental health crisis that were detained and evaluated pursuant to 5150 Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) or 5585 WIC:

| Year | SMART Requested | SMART Dispatched | % SMART Handled |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 2020* | 7,469 | 5,671 | 75.9% |
| 2019 | 7,847 | 6,707 | 85.5% |
| 2018 | 8,245 | 6,997 | 84.9% |
| 2017 | 7,938 | 6,870 | 86.5% |
| 2016 | 7,324 | 6,214 | 84.8% |

*2020 data is YTD through 12/17/2020

NOTE: The above statistics represent the number of calls in which patrol requested SMART via the MEU Triage Desk. The number of calls when SMART was dispatched represent the times that patrol notified the MEU Triage Desk and SMART was dispatched to the call. The 2020 numbers reflect drastically decreased staffing due to reassignments to COVID shelter details and civil unrest incidents.

These numbers do not include the number of calls when patrol elected not to notify the MEU Triage Desk, when patrol handled the call as a crime but did not indicate that mental illness was involved, or when Communications Division dispatched the call as a crime with no mental illness nexus communicated on the comments of the call.

- **A breakdown of MEU's response times to their calls;**

Under the current MEU SMART dispatch system, SMART units are dispatched by the MEU Triage Desk upon request from patrol officers. One or two SMART are assigned to each geographical bureau to help reduce response time. However, the system does not capture the SMART team's response time once they are requested. Patrol officers may request SMART via police radio or by calling the MEU Triage desk directly.

Beginning in January 2021, the MEU is implementing a Co-Response Model where SMART will be co-dispatched with patrol officers on certain mental health-related calls. Dispatch responsibility will transition to Communications Division. When this occurs, Communications Division will capture response times for SMART, and the data can be collected and queried.

- **Information on MEU's coordination with Comprehensive Cleaning and Rapid Engagement (CARE) teams;**

In September 2019, Mayor Garcetti's office requested that the MEU train Los Angeles Sanitation (LASAN) and Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) personnel on best practices when dealing with persons suspected of suffering from mental illness. The MEU Training Unit conducted a four-hour block of instruction and trained 262 personnel who were going to be assigned to CARE teams. Aside from the training conducted in September 2019, the MEU has never coordinated with CARE teams, as the mission of MEU is crisis response, not homeless outreach. If CARE teams needed assistance, they would request and coordinate with the Homeless Outreach and Proactive Engagement (HOPE) teams.

- **Any potential staffing needs or improvements that need to be made so the Department can be effective in its response to the needs of those experiencing homelessness that are affected by mental illness:**

Mental Evaluation Unit and SMART support patrol for mental health crisis calls. To help assist with an expected increase in demand for SMART resulting from co-response dispatch, the MEU would need to be expanded. That expansion would need to include a commitment from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) to hire more clinicians.

In 2015, the MEU's SMART expanded to 92 officers, which included 16 supervisors, with the goal of fielding 17 cars per day. Since then, attrition has left SMART to deploy approximately 12 teams per day with 63 officers. In 2015, the LACDMH expanded from 15 clinicians to 30 clinicians assigned to SMART. Currently, there are approximately 29 LACDMH SMART clinicians, with four LACDMH supervisors, assigned to SMART. However, five of those clinicians are assigned to the ACCESS Center or other specialized assignments, limiting the number of cars deployed with both a clinician and a SMART officer. In addition, Los Angeles County is also experiencing a hiring freeze, not allowing for vacancies to be filled at this time.

To return to the 2015 expansion goal of deploying 17 SMART cars per day, the MEU would need 76 officers total, which is an additional 13 officers and one clinician. To deploy 34 SMART teams, the MEU would need 152 officers and 60 clinicians. It is recommended that the LACDMH incorporate a 12% buffer to account for absences due to vacation, illness, or training every deployment period. Currently, the LACDMH deployment plan does not account for a 12% buffer in field deployment personnel.

Therefore, if a SMART clinician cannot report for their shift, the MEU will not be able to deploy a car with clinical support.

CONCLUSION

Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team 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 dispatch protocols limit SMART's ability to respond to a greater number of the mental health crisis calls dispatched. The Department is currently reviewing and modifying the dispatch of SMART units, which will reduce the response time to calls for service involving persons in a mental health crisis.

Prepared by:
Detective Support and Vice Division