



DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

hope. recovery. wellbeing.

LISA H. WONG, Psy.D.
Director

Curley L. Bonds, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

Connie D. Draxler, M.P.A.
Acting Chief Deputy Director

October 12, 2023

TO: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Lisa H. Wong, Psy.D.
Director

SUBJECT: **BI-ANNUAL UPDATE ON ALTERNATIVE CRISIS RESPONSE
(ITEM 18, AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2020)**

On September 29, 2020, the Board approved the motion, Los Angeles County Alternative Crisis Response (ACR), directing the Department of Mental Health (DMH), in coordination with the Chief Executive Office's (CEO) Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) Office, to move forward with the recommended "Next Steps" in the August 17, 2020, report, "[LA County Alternative Crisis Response: Preliminary Report and Recommendations](#)," and provide the Board with a progress report in 60 days and quarterly thereafter, which was subsequently modified to bi-annual updates. Effective November 1, 2022, DMH assumed full responsibility of ACR.

Our previous ACR updates to the Board are [available here](#). This is the seventh report to the Board and serves as the update for the motions: Crisis Response Coordination (Item 3, Agenda of March 4, 2020); Alternatives to Law Enforcement Crisis Response (Item 40-H, Agenda of June 23, 2020); the September 2021 and December 2021 reports for Los Angeles County Alternative Crisis Response (Item 18, Agenda of September 29, 2020); Pursue an Agreement with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to Provide Mental Health Crisis Response (Item 43-E, Agenda of October 19, 2021); and Expand the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Mobile Crisis Response Teams to 24/7 (Item 6, Agenda of November 16, 2021).

Data Analytics

The below data provides a brief overview of the ACR data regularly monitored by DMH. DMH continues to review the data and add additional metrics for review.

	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23
988 Calls	5094	4773	4611	4878	4224	4052	5332	6412	5642	5412
Percentage (%) Resolved by 988	95%	95%	94%	95%	95%	94%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Number of Calls Transferred to DMH	8	6	8	11	24	47	51	57	59	57
ACCESS Crisis Calls	4487	4019	3694	3893	3803	4321	3783	3860	3394	3272
FIT Dispatch	1154	1091	1082	1216	1181	1403	1271	1453	1280	1204
Average Time to Dispatch (Hours)	7.4	5.8	6.1	5.7	3.7	3	2.75	2.33	2.28	2.22
Average Time to Arrival (Hours)	8.3	6.6	6.9	6.648	4.55	3.97	3.77	3.3	3.3	3.23
Percentage (%) Hospitalized	35%	30%	31%	32%	43%	46%	44%	47%	39%	40%
Percentage (%) Involving Law Enforcement						5%	5%	5%	8%	11%
Crisis Stabilization Services					3056	3591	3310	3450	3359	3366
Average Length of Stay (Hours)					14.6	14.5	14	13.8	11.8	14.5
Percentage (%) Clients Re-Admitted					8%	8%	8%	7%	8%	7%

DMH also reported recent metrics to the Board in the [January 24, 2023](#), “Report Response on 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Hotline Rollout Update,” and the [June 13, 2023](#), “Report Back on the Collection of Standardized Urgent Care Center Data (Item 34, Agenda of April 28, 2015).”

Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit Implementation

DMH is currently in the process of finalizing plans to implement the new Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Service Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) requires all counties to implement the new benefit, and Los Angeles County (LA County) must implement by December 31, 2023. Counties will receive an enhanced 85 percent federal medical

assistance percentage (FMAP) for qualifying community-based mobile crisis services for the first 12 fiscal quarters. To qualify, mobile crisis teams, made up of two behavioral health practitioners, must be available to Medi-Cal beneficiaries experiencing a behavioral health crisis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Each mobile crisis service must include initial face-to-face crisis assessment, mobile crisis response, crisis planning, referrals to ongoing services (if appropriate), and a follow-up check-in.

The DMH Field Intervention Teams (FIT) and Therapeutic Transportation Teams (TTT) will qualify for the new benefit. DMH plans to submit the implementation plan by October 31, 2023, and have all required elements of the Medi-Cal Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services benefit fully implemented by January 2024.

Expansion of FIT

In April 2023, Vista del Mar began providing FIT services under their Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams (MCOT) contract in Service Planning Area (SPA) 5. In June 2023, DMH executed the final MCOT contract with Brain Health to cover SPAs 7 and 8. In July 2023, Sycamores MCOT had its first overnight team in operation from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, and Vista del Mar plans to have an overnight team in place in late October 2023.

DMH has been working to fill vacancies on the Psychiatric Mobile Crisis Response (PMRT) teams as well as other crisis response teams: Law Enforcement Co-response teams (LET), TTT, and School Threat Assessment Response Team (START). A Community Health Worker (CHW) hiring fair was held in June 2023. In July 2023, DMH implemented a “strike team” to address the high number of vacancies across ACR’s directly-operated programs. The strike team includes key staff from ACR including the Equitable Outcomes Teams, Human Resources, the Emergency Outreach and Triage Division, and the Quality, Outcomes, and Training Division.

The strike team coordinated the attendance of ACR programs at the Emergency Appointment hiring fair on September 12, 2023, and held a virtual ACR “meet and greet” on September 14, 2023, for potential hires to hear about ACR programs. Over 100 potential hires attended. On September 21, 2023, DMH held an ACR hiring fair that capitalized on the following key ACR bonuses described in the [August 2, 2023](#), "Report Response on Incentivizing Hiring for Los Angeles County Alternative Crisis Response" and approved by the Board on [August 8, 2023](#):

1. Ten thousand dollar sign on and retention bonuses for all field-based practitioners within ACR programs (PMRT, TTT, LET inclusive of Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Teams (SMART) and the Mental Evaluation Team (MET), and START) over the course of 18 months;
2. An increase in the Field Assignment Bonus from \$180 per month to \$280 month; and;

3. An increase in the existing weekend, evening and night Shift Differentials by 100 percent.

Through these efforts, DMH hired and/or offered conditional offers of employment to 50 practitioners, including CHWs, Registered Nurses, Medical Case Workers, and Psychiatric Social Workers across ACR programs since September 2023. The breakout of these positions across ACR programs is 18 for ACCESS, 14 for PMRT, 10 for TTT, 4 for LET, and 4 for START.

With the expansion of MCOT teams, PMRT teams, and other ACR programs, DMH plans to be 24/7 by November 2023. DMH will continue to utilize overtime PMRT staff to fill gaps in coverage.

Expansion of Crisis Stabilization Units and Crisis Residential Treatment Programs

DMH continues the process of adding Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs) in underserved areas throughout LA County as well as adding Crisis Residential Treatment Programs (CRTPs) on its four County Hospital Restorative Care Village campuses: LA General Medical Center, Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center, Olive View Hospital, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Behavioral Health Center. Three CRTPs have opened since the last ACR report for a total of 48 additional beds: Valley Star Behavioral Health at Martin Luther King, Jr. Behavioral Health Center on March 22, 2023; Valley Star Behavioral Health at Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center on June 14, 2023; and Central Star Behavioral Health at Olive View Hospital on May 17, 2023. Another five CRTPs are set to come on-board over the next three months. DMH continues to be in the early stages of additional CSUs. Construction started on two youth CSUs in August 2023.

Resources and Marketing

DMH has developed a new ACR webpage (www.dmh.lacounty.gov/acr) and is working to expand the resources and materials available on the webpage. In addition, DMH finalized a marketing scope of work that includes multimedia services (videos, photography, and graphic design) to inform the community about ACR services, specifically mobile crisis response available through FIT. The goal of the marketing campaign is to profile various crisis response programs, feature client success stories, and provide educational information on what to do when experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The marketing Statement of Work (SOW) is expected to go out for bid by November 2023.

ACR Stakeholders and Partnerships

DMH continues to provide monthly ACR providers meetings, monthly ACR Newsletters, and quarterly live stakeholder engagement webinars. In addition, DMH held the "ACR

City Summit” on July 20, 2023. Over 130 City and County staff, first responders, crisis teams, and providers attended the event. The first panel discussion focused on who to call during a mental health crisis, who will respond, where the person in need will go, and where will they be treated within the DMH network of care. The second panel featured City of LA representatives, who reviewed their field team, Crisis and Incident Response through Community Led Engagement (CIRCLE), and West Hollywood representatives, who talked about their Care Team. The third and final panel discussed a path forward around the future of alternative response, challenges and opportunities, and the role of County and cities.

DMH finalized a contract between DMH and the *Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services (LANES)* to onboard ACR providers to LANES in May 2023. This contract is paid for by the California Department of Health Care Services Crisis Care Mobile Units (CCMU) grant awarded to DMH. As of August 2023, six Legal Entity providers have signed the **Data Exchange Participation Agreement (DEPA)**, seven Legal Entity providers are currently reviewing the DEPA, three Legal Entity providers have shared information but have not made a formal commitment yet, and DMH is outreaching to an additional four Legal Entities.

DMH continues to partner with law enforcement through the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC). The CCJCC DMH/Law Enforcement workgroup held multiple workgroup meetings to finalize a 911-988 diversion protocol. The workgroup also identified four sites to pilot the diversion protocol: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), Bell Gardens, Culver City, and Pomona Police Departments. In addition, the workgroup conducted an in-person field visit to an Urgent Care Center (UCC) and Sobering Center. Currently, the workgroup has held multiple in-person workgroup sessions to develop best practices and shared understanding for crisis situations involving both mental health and law enforcement.

Other ACR Initiatives

1. **ACR Permanent Positions:** DMH received approval to move forward with 34 permanent ACR positions.
2. **Expansion of 988 Priority Line:** DMH expanded the warm-transfer connection between Didi Hirsch 988 and the ACCESS Center to include first party callers. All Didi Hirsch 988 calls requiring in-person field response can be directly connected to the ACCESS Center for dispatch.
3. **Wraparound Pilot:** Similar to current Full-Service Partnership protocols, DMH initiated a pilot on June 30, 2023, to dispatch the individual's Wraparound treatment team if the individual in-crisis is enrolled in a DMH Wraparound provider. These providers are expected to be available 24/7 and are best situated to respond.
4. **Rapid Cycle Improvement Project:** Workgroup members, consisting of ACR,

PMRT, and ACCESS Center staff, as well as our union partners, examined processes for dispatching PMRT. Beginning October 2, 2023, "Afterhours PMRT" will be dispatched via Microsoft Teams in order to streamline the dispatch process.

5. **PMRT Innovations Sprint:** The PMRT Innovation Sprint is a countywide improvement program that runs from April to November of this year. During the sprint, each service planning area PMRT site will test different interventions to assess their impact on reducing response times.
6. **Urgent Appointment Centralized Scheduling Pilot:** As of September 5, 2023, SPA 3 PMRT has the ability to provide individuals in crisis with an urgent appointment within 48 hours at any directly-operated program or Legal Entity provider in SPA 3 by calling a single phone number. The goal is to expand this centralized scheduling pilot to other service areas.
7. **Vehicles for PMRT:** DMH received 11 new mini-vans for use by PMRT programs in order to transport clients instead of relying solely on ambulances.
8. **Guaranteed Inpatient Beds:** DMH has contracted with four inpatient facilities to set aside 42 beds for use by DMH ACR programs. The beds will be tracked using a Bed Availability and Usage Board to quickly and easily identify where a bed is available. The project is set to go live in November 2023.
9. **Metro:** DMH released an MCOT solicitation specific to the Metro System in order to address behavioral health crises on the Metro. Unfortunately, even with increased incentives added to the solicitation, there have not been any bids for this solicitation. At this time, DMH has been meeting with Metro to conduct a needs evaluation and determine how best to move forward.
10. **City of West Hollywood Partnership:** A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is in the final stages of being signed between the City of West Hollywood and DMH. This MOU will coordinate behavioral health crisis response between the West Hollywood Care Team and DMH. If a DMH FIT (PMRT or MCOT) is not available within 30 minutes, ACCESS will contact the West Hollywood Care Team to respond in addition to dispatching FIT.

Key Priorities for 2023

1. **Lower response time through FIT expansion:** DMH continues to see improvements in lowering dispatch and arrival time of FIT (up to 65 percent reduction) and will continue to work towards lowering response times.
2. **Law enforcement partnerships:** DMH worked with Law Enforcement through the CCJCC to identify six 911 Call Centers, or Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP), for 911-988 diversion and finalized a 911-988 toolkit. DMH will continue developing shared understanding of Law Enforcement and Mental Health collaboration and expand upon 911-988 diversion.
3. **Standardized screener:** DMH finalized and piloted a crisis screener and continues to work toward full implementation of the screener within the DMH

Each Supervisor
October 12, 2023
Page 7

ACCESS Help Line in order to appropriately route crisis calls while also collecting a standardized set of data.

The next report on ACR will be submitted on January 5, 2024. Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me, or staff can contact Jennifer Hallman, ACR Unit Program Manager, at (213) 943-8289 or via email at jhallman@dmh.lacounty.gov.

LHW:JH:lm

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department