



AGENDA ITEM: 3.b.

July 20, 2023

DISCUSSION ITEM TITLE:

**Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Mental Evaluation Team (MET) Update**

BACKGROUND:

The current Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Mental Evaluation Team (MET) program was created in 2015 to address the increasingly frequent interaction between law enforcement and a person experiencing a mental health episode. MET is a co-responder team staffed by a LASD deputy and a Department of Mental Health (DMH) clinician. Part of the duties of the MET unit is to reduce the number of use of force incidents and to prevent fatalities.

On January 10, 2017, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion directing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), LASD, the Health Agency, DMH, and the Office of Diversion and Reentry to, among other things, develop a timeline for increasing the number of MET units and to find funding to ensure the continuity and stability of MET.¹ Also, by separate motion, the Board directed the Commission to identify potential improvements to MET.²

At the February 15, 2018, Commission meeting, the MET ad hoc committee presented their report to the full Commission. After discussion, the Commission voted and approved the MET ad hoc committee's report, which contains a total of 33 specific recommendations outlined under four categories: (1) increase the number of MET units from 23 to 60, (2) prioritize department-wide de-escalation training with a mental health focus, (3) promote inter-agency collaboration with other mental health partners and stakeholders, and (4) treat MET and department-wide de-escalation training with a mental health focus as equally important.³

LASD AND DMH MET ISSUE:

In 2020 and 2021, LASD proposed expanding MET to 45 units; however, DMH was unable to match the staffing needs due to various challenges with hiring personnel.⁴ Despite the shortage of MET units, MET respond to more than 4,300 incidents in each of those years.^{5;6} LASD and DMH's ongoing inability to hire personnel is one of the factors that has delayed the expansion of MET units.^{7;8}

¹ L.A. County Board of Supervisors Meeting January 10, 2017, [Agenda Item 12](#)
² L.A. County Board of Supervisors Meeting January 10, 2017, [Agenda Item 58-A](#)
³ MET Ad Hoc Committee Report (2018): [Commission MET Report 2018](#)
⁴ LASD MET Integrated Report April 2023
⁵ DMH MET Data 2020-2021 [Attachment I](#)
⁶ DMH MET Data 2021-2022 [Attachment II](#)
⁷ DMH MET Data 2021-2022 [Attachment III](#)
⁸ DMH MET Data 2021-2022 [Attachment IV](#)

At the January 20, 2022, Commission meeting, the Commission received an update from LASD and DMH regarding MET. The Commission was informed that the MET program has not increased the number of MET units to 60 as recommended in the ad hoc committee’s report.⁹

At the February 16, 2023, Commission meeting, the Commission requested that LASD provide an annual status report regarding the implementation of the Commission’s MET recommendation.¹⁰

On April 4, 2023, the Board approved a motion directing DMH, CEO, and the Department of Human Resources to establish a plan for a pilot program to incentivize the hiring and retention of field-based positions that are a part of DMH’s various mental health crisis response programs, including MET.¹¹

RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSION:

Staff is concerned about the potential risk of harm to community members when LASD encounters someone experiencing a mental health episode. Equally troubling is the MET program’s slow growth.

Staff recommends that the Commission receive and file this report. Staff will continue to monitor this matter and report back when necessary.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

- Department of Mental Health - Miriam Brown
- Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department spokesperson
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Greater Los Angeles County - Mark Gale

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⁹ Civilian Oversight Commission Meeting [Statement of Proceedings](#) January 20, 2022

¹⁰ Civilian Oversight Commission [Meeting February 16, 2023](#) video

¹¹ L.A. County Board of Supervisors Meeting April 4, 2023, [Agenda Item 7](#)