



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH**  
hope. recovery. wellbeing.



PRESS RELEASE  
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**LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND CITY OFFICIALS REVEAL NEW JOINT  
CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
ALTERNATIVES TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

***New Therapeutic Transportation Pilot Program will begin Jan. 1, 2021 and be studied as a means to effectively triage emergency responses for those experiencing a mental health crisis***

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**LOS ANGELES** – Los Angeles County and City officials today announced a unique new partnership that represents an unarmed model of emergency response for those experiencing a mental health crisis. Through the new ***Therapeutic Transportation Pilot Program***, County mental health experts will be integrated into the emergency response for calls that come into 911 or go directly to the LA City Police Department or LA City Fire Department. The program will launch Jan. 1, 2021 and be studied for one year with a focus on sustaining and expanding the program into other cities within Los Angeles County.

The Therapeutic Transportation Pilot Program will embed a team of County mental health experts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in five LA City Fire stations across the County to co-respond or take lead on incoming emergency calls related to, or presumed to involve, an individual experiencing a mental health crisis.

The mental health team will utilize state-of-the-art therapeutic vans launched by Los Angeles County in 2019 that are specifically equipped to transport individuals experiencing a mental health crisis to a location where they can be stabilized or connected to care that addresses immediate needs. The team includes a trained County clinician that can provide therapeutic support and de-escalate situations along with a monitor and equipment to connect remotely with a psychiatrist who can speak with the individual in crisis while in transit.

Los Angeles County has provided a form of co-response to include mental health teams integrated with law enforcement for many years. The County's Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams have responded to more than 35,000 calls in the last 12 months, 15,000 with law enforcement where an individual was in crisis. This new Therapeutic Transportation Pilot Program continues to expand these efforts by integrating the County mental health team directly onsite with the emergency responders (LA City Fire for this pilot program), further reducing response times.

“This is another step forward in Los Angeles County’s efforts to vastly improve treatment for those experiencing a mental health crisis in a more thoughtful and effective way,” said **LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger**. “As a long-time advocate for more accessible and effective treatment, it is an honor to be a part of this program and partner with the City of Los Angeles to enhance mental health services for those in crisis.”

“We need two important things to happen when a person calls for help during a mental health crisis: the right people need to respond, and we need to take them to the right place for treatment,” said **LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn**. “This new therapeutic van program means that not only will trained mental health experts show up to de-escalate a situation and help a person in a mental health crisis, they will actually be able to take them safely to a Mental Health Urgent Care Center for compassionate, effective treatment.”

“Reform moves faster when you act with purpose and embrace partnership,” said **LA City Mayor Eric Garcetti**. “Reimagining public safety means taking bold steps forward to make everyone feel safe and secure. The Therapeutic Transportation Pilot moves the needle in a way that can become a model for communities everywhere in America,”

“Too often when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, this individual is met by an armed public safety response, which can escalate the situation by increasing the individual’s stress and anxiety,” said **LA County Department of Mental Health Director Dr. Jonathan E. Sherin**. “This approach can be counterproductive to helping stabilize the individual experiencing the emergency. This expansion of the County’s Therapeutic Transportation Program in partnership with LA City Fire will further help individuals experiencing these mental health emergencies get the support and care they need in a time of crisis.”

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