

# Behavioral Health Commission



**Crisis Response Recommendations**



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
& RECOVERY SERVICES**

# San Mateo County Behavioral Health Commission

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- The commission reviews and evaluates the County's mental health needs, services, facilities and special programs, agreements dealing with mental health; **advises the Board of Supervisors and the Mental Health Director of any aspect of the local mental health program**; reviews and approves procedures used to ensure citizen and professional involvement at all stages of the planning process; submits an annual report to the Board of Supervisors on the needs and performance of the County's mental health system.
- Along with the 19 appointed members, there are two Youth Commissioner seats on the Commission, and one seat on the Children & Youth Committee. The regular meetings of the Commission are held on the first Wednesday of each month and the youth committee meets the third Wednesday each month.



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
COMMISSION**



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**HEALTH SYSTEM**  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
& RECOVERY SERVICES

# Background

- Increasing demand on law enforcement across the country to respond to calls related to persons experiencing a mental health disorder
- Approximately 50% of the San Mateo county jail population has some form of mental illness
- Various models of collaborations between law enforcement and mental health providers are being deployed nationally.
- BHC convened an Ad Hoc Committee to focus on services County wide crisis services.



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# Executive Summary

After reviewing the County's current mental health crisis response approach and services, speaking with providers, clients, and agencies, and researching alternative models across the country, the Ad Hoc Committee on Police & Mental Health Partnerships identified the following;

## **Major findings include:**

- The need for mental health service to be inserted into the 911 system
- The need to triage mental health calls for service early
- The need for consistent, County wide services for mental health crisis
- The need for County wide standards on dealing with mental health crisis
- The need for comprehensive integrated system of services accessible to anyone, anywhere, and anytime, providing "No Wrong Door"

# Process



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- Collected and reviewed public comments from family members and clients on mental-health, crisis-related interactions with law enforcement
- Researched and reviewed Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), PERT, and alternative crisis response programs
- Engaged with and/or heard presentations from:

San Mateo County Crisis Services

John Gardner Center

NAMI San Mateo

San Mateo County Dispatch

San Mateo County PERT & CIT

ACLU MidPen

Democracy for America, Social Justice Task Force

San Mateo Democrat Central Committee, Police Reform Task Force

Santa Clara County Behavioral Health / PERT / Mobile Crisis Response Team

Mental Health First

CAHOOTS

Santa Rosa inRESPONSE Team



# Recommendation #1

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## Add “Mental Health to Dispatcher Protocols

- Our recommendation is to add a criterion in the protocol for dispatchers answering 911 calls for service. We recommend adding “Mental Health” to the 911 answering protocol. Dispatchers should now ask, “911, do you need police, fire, EMS or mental health services.”
- Our current emergency telephone system or 911 must be updated and overhauled to reflect complicated mental health concerns.
- We also recommend looking inside 911 call centers, how they code and dispatch calls, and how to divert on the same or compatible platforms.

# Recommendation #2

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## Mental Health Integrated Dispatch

- Embed a licensed, professional mental health clinician in the 911 call center, whose purpose is to assist in triaging calls for mental health services

# Recommendation #3

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## Stand Alone, Non-Armed, Crisis Services

- Stand-alone, non-armed, 24/7, mobile mental health crisis response unit designed to independently serve the entire County.
- Teams consist of a clinician, peer support, or community members with knowledge of veteran services, and/or a paramedic/EMT

# Recommendation #4

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## Community Based Crisis Stabilization Centers

- Establish community-based crisis stabilization centers



# Closing

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Very few communities offer anything close to the standard of care for these services. Without adequate crisis response services, communities are left to depend on law enforcement and emergency departments that are ill-equipped to help someone experiencing a mental health crisis. Making sure there is a range of services to help anyone in crisis, no matter where they live in San Mateo County, will help ensure no one in a mental health crisis fall through the cracks.

“Most calls that go through 911 don’t require a law enforcement response and can be transferred to a crisis line where we know the majority of calls, 80% and upward, are resolved at that level, and there’s no need for police involvement.”

<https://talk.crisisnow.com/mental-health-care-shouldnt-come-in-a-police-car/>



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# Questions?

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