

Legislation Text

File #: Resolution 11-2019, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 2/05/2019

Subject:

A resolution approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Littleton Police Department (LPD) and AllHealth Network for response to mental health emergencies.

Presented By: Doug Stephens, Chief of Police
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REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION:

Does city council support an MOU between AllHealth Network and the LPD which identifies joint roles and responsibilities in responding to mental health emergencies?

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, the LPD responded to over 700 calls for service involving mental health crises. Many of these calls were repeat contacts with individuals whose conditions result in frequent contact with law enforcement.

The LPD completes referrals to AllHealth Network for every call where officers believe follow-up mental health services would be beneficial to the individual. Historically, referrals result in follow-up contact by mental health service providers within approximately 72 hours after the initial police contact. Such a delay often results in less effective mental health service since most individuals are no longer experiencing the crisis situation which resulted in the initial contact. Therefore, they are less likely to accept services offered by mental health professionals.

In 2017 the LPD initiated a pilot program whereby officers teamed up with mental health clinicians from AllHealth Network to “co-respond” to active mental-health related calls for service. The co-responder rides along with LPD officers on patrol, or is stationed at LPD headquarters, to provide an immediate mental health response to calls for service. The officer’s role in these instances is to deescalate volatile situations and ensure a safe environment while the AllHealth clinician provides immediate assessment and access to mental health services for those in crisis.

The “co-responder” program has been very successful in reducing the number of repeat LPD contacts with chronic sufferers of mental health issues. Sometimes the co-responder has provided services which have resulted in the total elimination of service calls for some of Littleton’s most prolific LPD contacts.

This MOU formalizes the relationship between AllHealth and the LPD for the continuation of this valuable partnership.

PRIOR ACTIONS OR DISCUSSIONS:

None

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The co-responder program is very beneficial to the Littleton community. Numerous persons experiencing mental health crises were contacted by LPD and provided immediate access to mental health services. This has resulted in a greater number of individuals accepting help, which has led to decreased repeat calls for service to certain locations within Littleton.

The immediate availability of mental health professionals to respond with LPD officers to mental health crises is an invaluable tool in the police department's mission to safely resolve potentially dangerous encounters. This partnership also provides potential long-term solutions to individuals needing mental health services.

OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES:

Do not approve the MOU and eliminate the co-responder program. The LPD would continue to refer mental health contacts to AllHealth Network for later follow up by AllHealth.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

There is no fiscal impact to the city at this time since AllHealth participates with LPD as part of the mutual desire to better serve the citizens of Littleton experiencing mental health crises.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends council approve the resolution approving the MOU between AllHealth Network and the LPD.

PROPOSED MOTION:

I move to approve the resolution approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the Littleton Police Department and AllHealth Network for response to mental health emergencies.