



City of Palo Alto

(ID # 12051)

Policy and Services Committee Staff Report

Report Type: Action Items

Meeting Date: 3/9/2021

Summary Title: Update: Santa Clara County Mental Health Initiatives (PERT, MCRT, & Comm. Mobile Response Program)

Title: Update from the Santa Clara County Department of Behavioral Health in Relation to the Santa Clara County Mental Health Emergency Response Initiatives Including Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT), Mobile Community Response Team (MCRT), and the Community Mobile Response Program (CMRP)

From: City Manager

Lead Department: City Manager

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Policy and Services Committee hear an update from the Santa Clara County Department of Behavioral Health in relation to the Santa Clara County Mental Health Emergency Response Initiatives including Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT), Mobile Community Response Team (MCRT), and the Community Mobile Response Program.

Background

As part of the City's ongoing Race and Equity work, the City Council adopted a list of recommendations in November 2020 (link to Action Minutes (pages 4 and 5: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/79566>; Report [CMR 11754](#)). Two of the recommendations related to the City's response to mental health issues with an interest in having more non-sworn individuals responding to mental health calls in place of or with secondary support from a sworn officer. The City Council actions D and N are as follows:

D. Direct Staff to work with Santa Clara County on implementation of participation in the Santa Clara County Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) program and the Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) program and to return to the City Council with any necessary agreements for program participation;

N. If the County does not assign a resource to Palo Alto in the next six months, refer to Policy and Services Committee the exploration of the feasibility of a CAHOOTS-type program;

At the City Council 2021 Retreat, the City Council referred to the Policy and Services Committee (link: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/80335>):

To schedule [to] the Policy and Services Committee [a] discussion of the feasibility of a CAHOOTS-type program for March 2021.

The City Council discussion at the retreat included reference to the November City Council action mentioning an interest in a discussion about the mental health programs sooner than May 2021 as originally decided in November 2020.

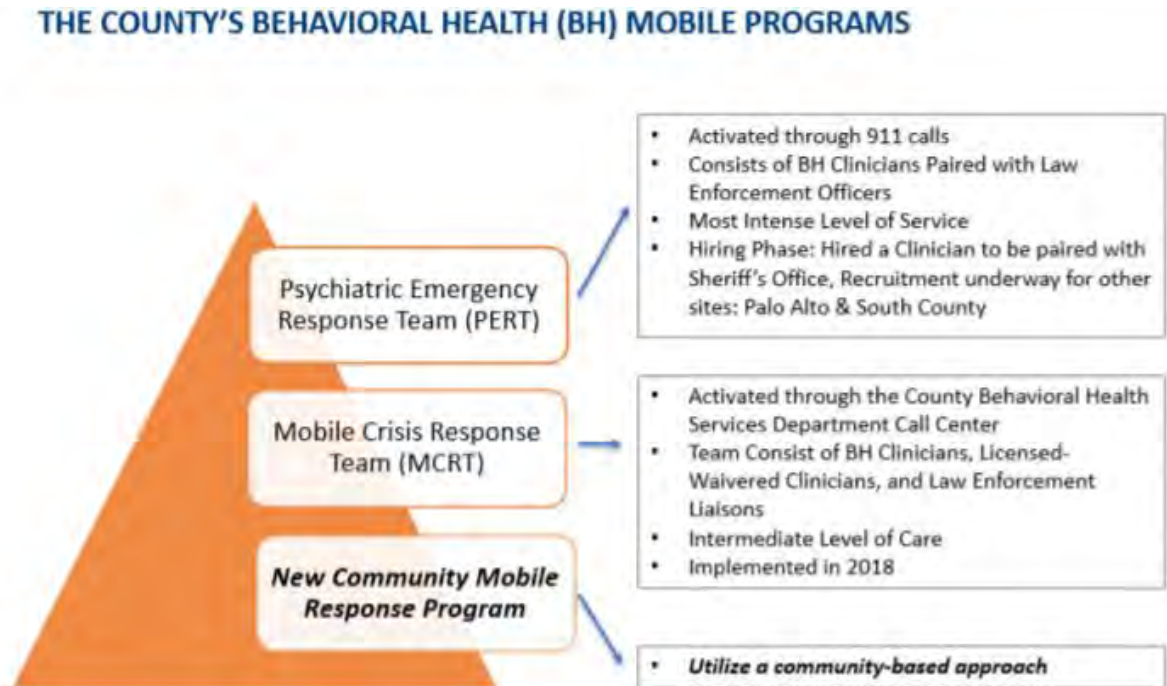
Discussion

PERT: The Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) program through the County of Santa Clara pairs a licensed mental health clinician with a law enforcement officer to provide expert mental health assistance on some calls-for-service. Recent City staff participation includes engaging in the County's hiring process and interviewing clinician candidates. The County continues to seek a PERT resource for Palo Alto and will provide an update at the Policy and Services meeting.

MCRT: The Santa Clara County Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) is a program that screens and assesses crisis situations over the phone and intervenes wherever the crisis is occurring for individuals that exhibit mental health symptoms. They provide an immediate response and deliver crisis intervention services at locations throughout the County. Teams are made of up licensed clinicians and therapists with training and expertise in crisis response. The teams function outside of law enforcement but work collaboratively with police when needed. This program (<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/Services/Pages/mobile-crisisresponse-team.aspx>) already exists within Santa Clara County and can be utilized in Palo Alto by any member of the public without any additional resources from the City of Palo Alto. The County will provide an update on the program at the Policy and Services meeting. The County has also prepared an informational video about the program: <https://youtu.be/txQeOw-Bonw>.

New Community Mobile Response Program (CMR): Santa Clara County is creating a new Community Mobile Response (CMR) program which will expand the County's mobile crisis response to individuals and families by adopting a community model that uses mental health peer support workers, people with lived experience, social workers/clinicians, and emergency medical support. This program closely mimics the Eugene, Oregon CAHOOTS program and is intended to provide mental health support separate from law enforcement. The County is working to implement this program as a countywide program but with focus on the San Jose and southern parts of the County first according to the program draft design: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/AboutUs/MHSA/Documents/2020/MHSA-INN-15-Project-Community-Mobile-Response-Program-DRAFT-02.12.2021.pdf>. The County currently has an open comment period about the program design from February 12, 2021 to March 14, 2021.

The County will provide additional information about all three of these programs (PERT, MCRT, and CMR) at the March 9 Policy and Services meeting and will include information about how the three programs work in relation to one another. It is imagined that the three different programs would address different levels of need in the mental health community. The following diagram provides some context of how they imagine the three programs working:



Stakeholder Engagement

The County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services, in partnership with the Behavioral Health Contractors' Association of Santa Clara County (BHCA), convened planning input sessions in December to obtain input on the programmatic elements of the new Community Mobile Response (CMR) program, such as the call center design, phone number, composition of the CMR team, the design-interior/exterior of the trauma-informed response vehicles, and the extent of the family involvement/loved one involvement for this program.

The County currently has an open comment period about the program design from February 12, 2021 to March 14, 2021. The program design information is available online here: [https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/AboutUs/MHSA/Documents/2020/MHSA-INN-15-Project-Community Mobile Response Program DRAFT 02.12.2021.pdf](https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/AboutUs/MHSA/Documents/2020/MHSA-INN-15-Project-Community%20Mobile%20Response%20Program%20DRAFT%2002.12.2021.pdf). A Public Hearing on the program with the County's Behavioral Health Board is scheduled on March 17, 2021.