

POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Beloit Police Department Launches Mental Health Program in Collaboration with Rock County

December 5, 2023 -- In a move toward enhancing public safety and the well-being of our community, the Beloit Police Department proudly announces the launch of a new pilot program that integrates mental health professionals into police responses to mental health and crisis calls for service.

The City of Beloit Police Department is collaborating with Rock County Human Services' Crisis Intervention to bring this program to our community. BPD is providing office space, equipment and training to the crisis worker, while Rock County is funding the crisis worker program.

This initiative is designed to address the growing need for specialized assistance during mental health crises and aims to provide immediate support, ensure follow-up care, and enhance the department's ability to handle sensitive calls for service.

The collaboration between law enforcement and mental health professionals reflects a progressive and community-focused approach to public safety. By partnering with mental health workers, the Beloit Police Department seeks to revolutionize emergency response procedures, prioritizing the mental health and overall safety of individuals in crisis.

Key elements of the pilot program include:

1. **Immediate Professional Support:** Mental health professionals will be dispatched alongside police officers to incidents involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. This collaborative response ensures that individuals receive immediate and specialized care from experts trained to de-escalate situations and provide emotional support.
2. **Follow-Up Care:** Recognizing the importance of ongoing care, the program includes provisions for follow-up services. Mental health professionals will engage with individuals and their families post-incident, offering resources, counseling, and assistance in connecting with community-based mental health services.

"This pilot program represents a proactive step towards a more compassionate and effective response to mental health crises in our community," said Police Chief Andre Sayles. "By integrating mental health professionals into our emergency response teams, we hope to provide better outcomes for individuals in crisis while also supporting the mental well-being of our officers.

"We, BPD, believes that having this worker out in the community will ease the process and lead to individuals having greater success getting connected to services that prevent them from needing to use an emergency room or ending up in the criminal justice system."

The Beloit Police Department is committed to transparency and community engagement throughout the pilot program. Regular assessments and feedback from the community will be used to refine and improve the initiative continuously.

The Beloit City Council approved the program through a Memorandum of Understanding with Rock County on Monday night.

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