



From Crisis to Care

When someone is experiencing a behavioral health crisis, the right response can make all the difference. **Crisis to Care Collaborative** is committed to transforming behavioral health crisis response in Erie County so that individuals in crisis are met with understanding, urgency, and are connected to the appropriate level of care to support their recovery.

About Crisis to Care Collaborative

A first-of-its-kind collaboration, with leadership and funding from Patrick P. Lee Foundation and support from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, this groundbreaking initiative unites municipal and county government, law enforcement and emergency services, healthcare and behavioral health providers, advocates, and people with lived experience.

Through its Call-Respond-Go framework, the Collaborative aims to improve how crisis calls are handled, expand the use of mobile crisis teams and co-response units, and increase access to stabilization services so individuals have a safe, appropriate place to turn for immediate care.

Our Goals:

- To ensure that people in Erie County experiencing a behavioral health emergency receive accessible, effective behavioral health crisis stabilization services and follow-up care.
- To reduce the likelihood that people in Erie County experiencing a behavioral health emergency are arrested or brought to ECMC's Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP).



For more information, visit CrisisToCare.org

The Need for Reform

In Erie County, 911 call takers identify 21,000 calls annually (or approximately 60 calls each day) that are mental health related.

While progress has been made in how these calls are handled, including who is dispatched and where individuals are taken for care, our current system relies primarily on law enforcement to respond to behavioral health emergencies. In fact, last year, law enforcement responded to nearly 6,800 of the approximately 10,000 calls coded as mental health from the City of Buffalo.

Once on scene, many first responders report that their only option for immediate care is ECMC's Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP), one of the few 24/7 resources providing care for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Each day, approximately once every three hours, a police car or ambulance arrives at CPEP with someone from Buffalo who is experiencing a behavioral health emergency. While ECMC is working tirelessly to meet the need, this demand for services places additional pressure on the system and can complicate people receiving the care they need.

Achieving Foundational Improvements: Call-Respond-Go

The Crisis to Care Collaborative recognizes further improvements are needed to better connect individuals in crisis with appropriate care, reduce costs, and ease the burden on scarce public safety resources.

Our approach is guided by the national framework developed by the US Department of Health and Human Services—Someone to Call, Someone to Respond, and Somewhere to Go. With a focus on end-to-end improvements, we are analyzing data to understand current gaps and consulting national experts to identify policy and system improvement opportunities.

The Work Ahead

Numbers alone don't tell the full story. So, we will be hosting a listening session this summer to hear directly from members of our community with lived experience.

In the fall, we will present a set of actionable recommendations for how to strengthen Erie County's behavioral health crisis response system for the long term.

The Framework Consists of:

- **Someone to Call:** Improving how behavioral health-related crisis calls are identified and processed.
- **Someone to Respond:** Ensuring call takers can dispatch mobile crisis teams and/or co-response units instead of a traditional police/fire/EMS response.
- **Somewhere to Go:** Improving access to effective stabilization services so that individuals in crisis have a place to go for immediate care.