

December 12, 2024

Jane Mogavero, Executive Director  
Patrick P. Lee Foundation  
5166 Main Street, Suite 303  
Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear Ms. Mogavero:

We are writing to request assistance from the Patrick P. Lee Foundation with the development of a plan to improve the response to people experiencing a behavioral health emergency in Erie County.

Every day, multiple times a day, calls from Buffalo and surrounding communities are placed to 911 involving someone who needs immediate assistance because of a mental health or substance use related crisis. We have worked hard to improve how those calls are processed, who is dispatched when an on-scene response is necessary, and where someone is brought when immediate care is needed. Although these efforts have resulted in important innovations and improvements, local law enforcement continue to respond regularly to behavioral health emergencies and many first responders report that their only option when someone needs immediate care is to bring them to ECMC's Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP). Additional improvements are necessary to increase the likelihood people in crisis are connected to the appropriate level of care that helps them recover. Such improvements would also help the city and county save money and make better use of scarce public safety resources.

We recognize addressing this situation requires extensive collaboration among multiple stakeholders representing municipal, county, and state government, as well as people working in public safety and behavioral health. Support from the Patrick P. Lee Foundation could help us convene such stakeholders, collect and analyze data to better understand the current situation, and engage national experts who could determine where opportunities exist to improve existing policies.

In making this request we are committed to the following:

1. Ensuring various data is made available to expert consultants including information regarding calls to 911 and other hotlines; the use of alternative responses, such as mobile crisis; and the use of jail, CPEP, and other options available to police and other first responders dispatched to a scene involving a person experiencing a behavioral health emergency.

2. Meeting and working together to review findings and recommendations from expert consultants.
3. Sharing with the public the initiative, conclusions, and next steps resulting from this process.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

*Lisa M. Chimera*  
Lisa M. Chimera (Dec 16, 2024 15:32 EST)

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Lisa Chimera  
Deputy County Executive  
Erie County  
95 Franklin St #1600  
Buffalo, NY 14202

*Mark O'Brien*  
Mark O'Brien (Dec 18, 2024 14:27 EST)

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Mark O'Brien, LCSW-R  
Commissioner of Mental Health  
Erie County  
95 Franklin St. Rm 1237  
Buffalo, NY 14202

*Brian G. Ross*  
Brian G. Ross (Dec 18, 2024 08:02 EST)

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Brian Ross  
Commissioner  
Erie County Central Police Services  
45 Elm Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203

*John C. Garcia*  
John C. Garcia (Dec 16, 2024 15:14 EST)

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John C. Garcia  
Sheriff  
Erie County Sheriff's Office  
10 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14202

*Thomas J. Quatroche Jr.*  
Thomas J. Quatroche Jr. (Dec 12, 2024 16:12 EST)

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Thomas J. Quatroche, Jr., PhD  
President and CEO  
ECMC  
462 Grider Street  
Buffalo, NY 14215

*Christopher P. Scanlon*  
Christopher P. Scanlon (Dec 13, 2024 11:40 EST)

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Christopher P. Scanlon  
Mayor  
City of Buffalo  
65 Niagara Square  
Buffalo, NY 14202

# Erie County Leadership Letter to PPLF


Final Audit Report


2024-12-18


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