



Crisis to Care
COLLABORATIVE

2026 Progress Report Executive Summary

**Erie County, New York
September 2026**



Additional financial support was provided by the Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation and the Garman Family Foundation, which is administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo.

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

The Erie County Crisis to Care (CTC) Collaborative is a public/private partnership that seeks to:

1. Ensure that people experiencing a behavioral health emergency receive accessible, effective behavioral health crisis stabilization services and follow-up care.
2. Reduce the likelihood that individuals in crisis are arrested or inappropriately taken to the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) at Erie County Medical Center (ECMC).

The CTC Collaborative is designing and implementing a plan that draws on the analysis of

extensive data, expertise of national consultants, and extensive consultation with people in Erie County who work on the front lines of public safety, emergency services, and behavioral health.

The CTC Collaborative organizes its work into three components: how calls to 911/988 involving a behavioral health emergency are processed (**CALL**); who is dispatched when an on-scene response is necessary (**RESPOND**); and, where someone who needs immediate care is transported (**GO**).

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MEASURABLE GOALS

	OBJECTIVE	2026 TARGET
Call	1. Improve the coding of 911 calls.	Code 13,000+ 911 emergency calls as behavioral health-related (up from 9,734 in 2025).
	2. Improve answering rates for crisis hotline calls.	Answer 85% of calls (up from 70% in 2025).
Respond	3. Route at least 500 “Code 25” calls to nurse navigators.	Route 500 code 25 calls from Buffalo to nurse navigators (up from 0 in 2025).
	4. Improve and expand utilization of co-response programs.	Targets are department-specific — Buffalo, Cheektowaga, and West Seneca PDs are each working to increase behavioral health-related calls involving Behavioral Health Team officers and clinician co-responders.
	5. Increase the rate at which mobile crisis teams complete assessments.	Complete 65% of MCT community assessments (up from 49% in 2025).
Go	6. Increase the use of alternatives to CPEP.	Achieve 152 average monthly presentations (~5 per day) at the Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center (ICSC), (2025 data NA). Reduce visits ECMC CPEP visits to 8,987 (down from 9,963 in 2025).
	7. Reduce repeat visits to CPEP.	Reduce the number of visits by people with three or more visits in a year to 30% of annual CPEP visits (down from 35% in 2025).
	8. Ensure engagement in post-crisis treatment.	Partners continue to have conversations around multi-year targets.
Cross-Cutting	9. Support the workforce.	In partnership with University at Buffalo School of Social Work, regional strategies to support the workforce are being identified.
	10. Support county-led initiatives and monitor progress.	County leadership is working to identify multi-year targets.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- **December 2024** Top elected officials in Erie County write to the Lee Foundation seeking assistance to improve the response to people in crisis.
- **May 2025** The Leadership Committee, which includes the mayor of Buffalo, the CEO of the Erie County Medical Center, the county sheriff, the deputy county executive, the commissioner of Erie County Central Police Services, and the commissioner of the Erie County Department of Mental Health, in partnership with the executive director of the Lee Foundation, launches the Crisis to Care Collaborative.
- **August 2025** The CTC Collaborative begins convening listening sessions with advocacy groups and members of the community.
- **December 2025** The CTC Collaborative releases the *Status Report*, describing findings from an exhaustive analysis of 2024 data drawn from ten government agencies and health providers, and contributions from over 30 agencies participating in working groups.
- **September 2026** The CTC Collaborative publishes the *2026 Progress Report*, which provides ten objectives for improving crisis response across Erie County and based on what data showed in 2024, identifies targets that the CTC Collaborative expects to hit by end of 2026.

WHAT'S AHEAD

In early 2027, the CTC Collaborative's Leadership Team and the Lee Foundation will evaluate progress towards the objectives and targets outlined in the *2026 Progress Report*. The findings will inform the development of a long-term strategic plan which will have clear milestones for the next 3–5 years. Realizing those goals has the potential to transform behavioral health emergency response in Erie County and to serve as a model for New York State and beyond.



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