**Denver’s Co-Responder Unit - Crisis Intervention and Response Unit**

The mission of the Crisis Intervention and Response unit (CIRU) is to improve outcomes, streamline services and create system efficiencies for people experiencing behavioral health issues who come to the attention of Denver law enforcement, corrections, and/or emergency responders. The goal of the program is to improve the lives of the residents of the City and County of Denver. This program both addresses ongoing legal contact concerns for residents and develops a holistic, wraparound approach for people who may be in acute crisis by connecting them with long term support in the community.

Building on the key elements of trauma informed service delivery: trustworthiness, safety, choice, collaboration and empowerment, CIRU provides an immediate crisis response to generate a solution-focused outcome for each individual. The primary mission of the CIRU is to support police by responding alongside officers handling mental illness crisis calls for service. Members of Denver’s CIRU employ licensed social workers with mental health and substance abuse knowledge to evaluate persons who pose a danger to themselves, to others or to community welfare. These clinicians work in collaboration with the Denver Police Department CIRU which is staffed by law enforcement officers. They respond out into the community in tandem. Through this approach, individuals with behavioral health concerns are able to directly problem solve with members of the CIRU on the least restrictive course of treatment.

**Program Design**

1. Reinforce, foster, and create effective, collaborative partnerships between police and other first responders, mental health practitioners, Sheriff Department staff and other community stakeholders, in order to direct customers to appropriate alternatives and resources; reduce hospitalization and/or jail; improve system response; and create effective crisis intervention and solutions in order to reduce the need for repeated interventions.
2. Provide training and education for officers and emergency responders to improve officer understanding of mental health, traumatic brain injury and addictions issues;
3. Provide short term case-management and pro-active follow-up care to reinforce appropriate interventions and to ensure engagement, address gaps and barriers and help persons stabilize behaviors and address needs;
4. Reduced number of persons with mental health issues in the jail system;
5. Improve information sharing as appropriate across systems and service providers through formalized communications and processes;
6. Reduce overall costs relating to persons with mental or behavioral health concerns including the use of emergency services;

CIRU is part of an overall effort to expand specialized law enforcement and behavioral health strategies tailored to the needs of those with behavioral/mental health disorders, such as:

* Multi-layered approach including co-responder, CIT Officer and follow-up services.
* Comprehensive data collection and information-sharing procedures related to community partnerships.
* Integrated mental health professionals with CIT Denver Police Department Officers and departments.
* Preventative planning to decrease and eliminate incarceration and/or hospitalization of mentally ill individuals by connection with appropriate supports in the community.
* Provide alternate care in the least restrictive environment through a coordinated and comprehensive system-wide approach.
* Prevent the duplication of mental health services.
* Facilitate the speedy return of police patrol units to patrol activities.

The efforts of the Denver Police Department and City of Denver are to provide ongoing support and services to every member of the Denver community. There is an ongoing belief through the Denver community that recovery and well-being are possible for everyone and through the collaborated efforts of the many Denver agencies, community partners, and law enforcement entities we can all achieve a recovery instilled Denver.