

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

May 8, 2015
1.8

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COUNCIL MOTION (HOMELESS/MENTAL HEALTH)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW this report.

DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

As prompted by Councilmember Mike Bonin, pursuant to the Los Angeles City Council "Motion," dated March 4, 2015, the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU), Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is reporting its strategy to engage in and participate as a "*Qualified Reporting Party*," as delineated within Laura's Law (California Assembly Bill 1421, Thompson, Chapter 1017, Statutes of 2002). This report will address:

- Department Engagement with Los Angeles County regarding Laura's Law Training
- Strategy to Train Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Personnel
- Laura's Law Implementation Timeline

Additionally, this report includes an overview of MEU services, current training curriculum, and the way in which that curriculum compares with nationwide best practices.

FINDINGS

Laura's Law Background

Assembly Bill (AB) 1421 (Thomson, Chapter 1017, Statutes of 2002) established the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Demonstration Project Act of 2002, known as Laura's Law. Laura's Law sought to address the needs of mentally ill adults at substantial risk for relapse and deterioration as a result of not having access to mental health services or voluntarily maintained participation in such services due to the symptoms of their mental illness, by providing a process for court-ordered outpatient treatment. This statewide legislation established an option for counties to provide a way for courts, probation and the mental health systems to address the needs of individuals who are unable to benefit from mental health treatment programs in the community without supervision. Also, Laura's Law has a "sunset clause," pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) §5349.5(a), of January 1, 2017.

The adoption and implementation of Laura's Law was left to the discretion of the counties. On Tuesday, July 15, 2014, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to expand the County's current pilot from 20 slots to 300 slots, which effectively made the AOT a countywide strategy.

Department Engagement with Los Angeles County regarding Laura's Law Training

The MEU has been an active participant, and is the only county law enforcement entity represented in the LACDMH Laura's Law Oversight Committee since its inception. Upon the initiation of the LACDMH Laura's Law discussions in 2014, the MEU identified itself as the LAPD conduit for managing LAPD AOT referrals. The MEU is developing report-based triage criteria delineated within the law, and as accepted by the LACDMH-AOT Unit, to facilitate appropriate referrals to the program.

Strategy to Train Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Personnel

Prior to engaging in the AOT program as a "*Qualified Reporting Party*," the MEU will generate an AOT assessment guide for sworn personnel that delineates the criteria for an appropriate referral. The MEU will also assist with the development of an on-line AOT Learning Management System (LMS) course for Department-wide delivery to ensure compliance with the requirements of the AOT program.

Laura's Law Implementation Timeline

The LACDMH-AOT program is utilizing Senate Bill 82 funding to hire the necessary outreach clinicians. At present the LACDMH-AOT Request for Proposals (RFP) strategy has not been fully implemented to identify and approve the appropriate Full Service Partnerships needed to facilitate the AOT program and provide the needed services to the individuals identified for engagement. The LACDMH has 300 identified AOT slots and 60 crisis residential beds; however, the LACDMH-AOT Unit is not expected to initiate and/or operationalize Laura's Law until May or June of 2015.

The LACDMH-AOT Unit is scheduled to provide training to County law enforcement agency personnel, which includes MEU personnel. The MEU was the first to receive the training, which occurred on April 1, 2015, at a MEU training day.

The Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU) Operation

Los Angeles has implemented several complementary program responses to address the complex needs of the jurisdiction. The LAPD MEU has been deployed to assist police officers with mental health crisis calls-for-service for over four decades. Implemented in 1993, Los Angeles was one of the first communities to develop police/mental health co-responder teams (Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team, or *SMART*). The program is co-supported by the LACDMH and is the largest of its kind in the country.

The program was designed to effectively link people who suffer from a mental health crisis to appropriate mental health services. In 2001 the LAPD implemented a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program in pilot locations.

Even after the implementation of SMART and CIT training, a serious problem remained that involved people with mental illnesses who repeatedly called the police or who were the subject of many calls-for-service. Those calls-for-service cost the City millions of dollars in emergency resources without positive outcomes. In 2005, the LAPD developed the Case Assessment and Management Program (CAMP) to identify and track the subjects of these repeat calls and to construct customized responses to their problems. The CAMP averages 15-20 new cases each week and its cases never close. The CAMP engages in continuous monitoring and coordination of linkages to services. The CAMP pairs police detectives with psychologists, nurses and/or social workers from the LACDMH to develop long-term solutions to each individual's specific needs.

The LAPD incorporated the SMART and CAMP in the MEU to manage the programs and points of intersection. The MEU also maintains its long established Triage Desk that fields calls from patrol officers who have questions regarding situations that involve people with mental illnesses. In these circumstances, the triage officer consults the MEU database (separate from the Crime Analysis Database system and protected from access outside the unit) to review their history with the police. A triage mental health nurse sits alongside the officer and queries the DMH database to identify the case manager, psychiatrist, or treatment centers. Collectively, the triage staff determines whether to dispatch a SMART unit or direct the patrol officer to transport the person directly to a mental health facility. If the Triage Desk determines that this person has repeatedly contacted police (or been the subject of frequent calls for intervention), they will refer the person to the CAMP coordinator for follow-up.

The MEU, represented as the LAPD's Mental Health Crisis Response Program (MHCRP), has an established Memorandum of Agreement with the LACDMH to continue the co-deployed operations of the MEU and to support the effective management new mental illness procedures that impact the City of Los Angeles. The LAPD mental health response strategy is firmly established and memorialized within its Department Manual and organizational structure. The MEU, a 20-hour a day, seven-day a week operation, is the primary LAPD point of contact to report calls-for-service involving persons who suffer a mental health crisis.

The primary mission of the MEU, as supported by the Federal Consent Decree for which the LAPD was mandated to comply, is to handle mental illness crisis calls-for-service in support of patrol operations. The MEU evaluates persons who pose a danger to themselves or to others per WIC §5150. The MEU does not manage cases that involve persons who simply suffer from a mental illness and it does not engage in homeless outreach missions.

Mental Illness Training

All LAPD mental illness training is grounded on “best practices” as first established by the LAPD, Consent Decree Mental Illness Project, Loadstar Management/Research Inc. Final Report, 2002. The LAPD has made use of “best practice” methodologies since that time to establish its training curriculums, and as a result, LAPD mental illness training is now considered within the global law enforcement community to be the “best practice” model.

In January 2015, the City of New York Police Department (NYPD) sent representatives to attend the MHIT training to evaluate the possible replication of the MHIT course at the NYPD. The MEU has also been engaged in a series of discussions with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department about replicating the MHIT course at their agency. The MHIT course has been highly sought after by several law enforcement agencies that sought to provide their officers with effective skills to manage and deescalate calls-for-service that involve persons who are in crisis. The MEU shared MHIT course content with the New South Wales Police Service, Australia, which was so impressed with the course content and design that it is integrating many of the unique elements of the MEU MHIT course into their own crisis intervention course. This sentiment was echoed by other police departments that have recently sent personnel to LAPD to conduct site visits, which includes the Denver Police Department, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department-Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT), Contra Costa County, and the Calgary Police Service, Canada.

As a National Learning Site for Law Enforcement Response to Mental Illness as designated in 2010, by the Council of State Governments/Bureau of Justice Assistance, the MEU fields numerous calls from outside law enforcement agencies that request training materials and guidance to help establish mental health crisis response protocols.

Since 2011, the MEU has graduated 104 LAPD officers from the MHIT course. The MEU presents the course every month, within the class size of 25 students. It is anticipated that 170 LAPD officers will be trained in the new MHIT during 2015; however, it is not the goal of the LAPD to train every officer in this course nor is it the prevailing strategy within the law enforcement community to teach every officer in a similar course. Therefore, the LAPD has ensured all officers receive some form of mental illness crisis response training to ensure proper call management.

The MEU has trained 801 LAPD officers in either the 40-hour CIT course or the 24-hour Mental Illness Overview Course from 2004 to 2012. In addition, the MEU continues to provide the following courses to LAPD personnel:

- Mental Illness Introduction for Adult Corrections Officers (8 hours)
- Dispatcher – Persons with Mental Illness (8 hours)
- Armed Prohibited Persons/Mental Health Firearms Prohibition System (2 hours)
- Crisis Communication for First Responders (8 hours)
- Combat to Community/Police and Veteran Interaction (8 hours)
- School Threat Assessment Response Team (8 hours)

The MEU also designed the following E-Learning and Tele-Courses that every officer was mandated to complete since 2002:

E-Learning

- Mental Illness – Use of Force and Crisis Intervention
- Mental Illness – Use of Force and Crisis Intervention – *Update*
- Legal Environment – Policing the Mentally Ill
- Mood Disorders
- Communicating with People with Disabilities

Tele-Course

- Recognizing Mental Illness: A Proactive Approach

In May 2014, all LAPD sworn personnel were mandated to complete the two-hour California POST mandated 2013 Mental Health Update course, which is a comprehensive course that provides an update on mental illness laws and focuses on communication and proper management of persons who suffer from a mental health crisis. Additionally, all recruit officers undergo approximately 14 hours of mental illness-related/infused training while in the Academy.

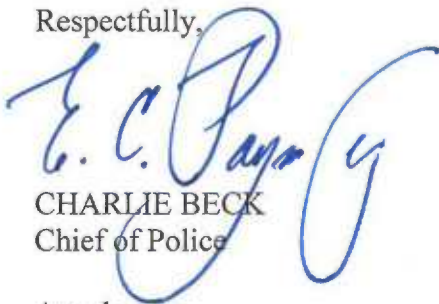
The LAPD is at the forefront of mental illness crisis training within the County. Additionally, its practices are strengthened by well documented and robust procedures, which is a critical shortcoming among many law enforcement agencies that focus only on training. The LAPD approach is both systematic and comprehensive.

CONCLUSION

The LAPD is very pleased with the mental illness crisis strategy it has designed and with the manner in which it sustains itself as a contemporary leader within the law enforcement community. The LAPD remains confident in its ability to address emerging issues and to ensure the City is providing quality service to the community as established within the mission and tenets of the LAPD. The recommendation to the Board is to continue to support the efforts of the LAPD MEU and its efforts to remain at the forefront of this important policing issue.

Should you have any questions, please contact Deputy Chief Kirk J. Albanese, Chief of Detectives, at (213) 486-7000.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. C. Beck", is written over the printed name and title of the Chief of Police.

CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

Attachment

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

May 11, 2015

1.1

TO: All Concerned Personnel

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE

In my absence First Assistant Chief Earl Paysinger will serve as Acting Chief of Police on Wednesday, May 13, 2015, from 8:31 a.m., through Friday, May 15, 2015, 7:36 p.m.

I will be available for notifications through Assistant Chief Paysinger's office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Beck', with a stylized, flowing script.

CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

c: Mayor's Office
Police Commission
Chief of Staff
Office of Operations
Office of Administrative Services
Office of Special Operations
Geographic Bureaus
RACR

PUBLIC SAFETY

MOTION

According to estimates, approximately 30 percent of the homeless individuals in the City of Los Angeles suffer from some form of mental illness. Many barriers to housing and services exist for homeless people with mental health problems. At the same time, mental health problems can be significantly worsened by living on the streets. We will never end homelessness in Los Angeles unless we address the issue of the mental illness among our homeless population.

Laura's Law is a California state law that provides community-based, assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) to a small population of individuals who meet strict legal criteria and who – as a result of their mental illness – are unable to voluntarily access community mental health services. The law is named for Laura Wilcox, who was shot and killed at the age of 19 by a man with untreated severe mental illness. Laura's Law and similar AOT laws across the country have successfully enabled people with severe mental illness to receive the treatment they need in the community. The state law, which passed in 2002, requires each county to implement its own program. In 2014, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved funding for the expansion of Laura's Law. The County will begin implementing the law this month. All of the procedures have been written, staff have been hired, and training is occurring. LAPD will be a "Qualified Requesting Party," which means the department can request an investigation of individuals in the community whom they believe are "unlikely to survive safely in community without supervision."

The appropriate coordinating agency with Los Angeles County is the LAPD's Mental Evaluation Unit. The unit is one of only six law enforcement entities recognized as a national learning site and model for "Specialized Policing Responses: Law Enforcement/Mental Health." The unit was developed more than four decades ago to reduce the potential for violence during police contacts involving people suffering from mental illness, while simultaneously assessing the mental health services available to assist them. Since 1993, as part of its Mental Illness Project, the department's Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART) has paired police officers and mental health professionals together to better recognize and handle the mentally ill. In 2005, the LAPD created the Case Assessment Management Program (CAMP) to assist in the intervention, referral, and placement of individuals who require acute mental health evaluation. Both SMART and CAMP work in close partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. As part of this program, LAPD uses a "co-response model." This means that police officers and mental health clinicians are housed out of the same building and respond to calls as a team. Officers and clinicians develop management schemes which employ an array of options from referrals for service, hospitalization and or management of the subject within the jail system.

Additionally, last year, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky created a "Third District Diversion and Alternative Sentencing Program" pilot project, designed as a way to provide chronically homeless and severely mentally ill individuals facing criminal charges with a carefully defined path out of jail and into recovery. The program was intended to provide 50 eligible participants with a variety of wraparound services—including permanent supportive housing and mental health treatment—intended to keep them off the streets, out of jails and emergency rooms, and put them on a path to self-sufficiency.


I THEREFORE MOVE that the Police Department prepare a report outlining how the department is engaging with Los Angeles County for training in Laura's Law; how that information will be shared with LAPD personnel in the department's divisions and various community police stations; and how soon LAPD will be able to avail itself of the County program.

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I FURTHER MOVE that the Police Department report on the current status of its Mental Evaluation Unit, including an overview of its scope of services, and explanation of the current training curriculum and how it compares with nationwide best practices, information on how frequent and widespread the training is, and how many officers are trained and where they are deployed.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Office of the City Attorney be requested to report on the status of the City's involvement with the Los Angeles County Third District Diversion and Alternative Sentencing Program pilot project, whether it has been beneficial, and whether there are opportunities for expanding the program or replicating it for cases handled by City prosecutors.

PRESENTED BY:


MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY:



INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

April 27, 2015
8.2

TO: Chief of Police

FROM: Chief of Detectives

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL MOTION (HOMELESS/MENTAL HEALTH)

Councilmember Mike Bonin, Los Angeles City Council initiated a "Motion," dated March 4, 2015, requiring the Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU), Los Angeles Police Department, to report its strategy to engage in and participate as a "*Qualified Reporting Party*," as delineated within Laura's Law (California Assembly Bill 1421, Thompson, Chapter 1017, Statutes of 2002), and to outline the MEU operation and its training curriculum. The requested analysis has been conducted and the appropriate correspondences have been forwarded for your review. The Department is at the forefront of the issues and is devoid of any issues of concern.

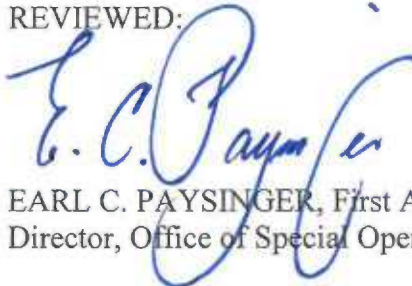
It is our position that the MEU is prepared to manage the Laura's Law provisions once implemented, and that the MEU has designed model curriculums to aid in managing mental illness crisis cases.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 486-7000.



KIRK J. ALBANESE, Deputy Chief
Chief of Detectives

REVIEWED:



EARL C. PAYSINGER, First Assistant Chief
Director, Office of Special Operations

Attachments