



## **CCSM Issues Development Subcommittee Final Board Approved 06-24-2022**

### **Too few mobile crisis providers in Maine**

#### **The Issue:**

Currently in Maine, we have only 87 full time crisis workers to handle 24/7 situations across the entire State of Maine. For reference for 24/7 statewide law enforcement response, there are 2,500 officers. While Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) realizes changes need to happen, they are currently going through a process to reform the crisis system. Until that reform happens, we need an immediate short-term plan to increase the number of competent crisis workers to handle the mental health crises across the State. Otherwise, law enforcement officers will continue to be the primary crisis responders for the State of Maine.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. First Responder Model: This term describes the staffing levels needed to adequately respond to a mobile crisis intervention. Currently DHHS uses a fee for service model which means providers do not have the funds to implement the recommended model.
2. Co-responders with law enforcement: This embeds social workers on law enforcement teams to respond to calls together when mental health expertise is needed.
3. Peer Support on mobile crisis teams: Having peer support specialists that respond to crisis interventions with a clinician.
4. Mental health education for all first responders: All first responders ought to have a robust mental health education to better assist individuals when they respond.
5. Increase the number of officers trained in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT):



Some law enforcement departments choose to train all their officers, and others train very few. We would like to see a larger percentage of trained personnel in Maine.

6. Have service users be trained to provide training to drivers on a yearly basis to understand the challenges and needs of those that use the service so customer service could be improved.

### **Expected Outcome:**

We would like to see the most appropriate responses to people in crisis situations across the State. We want both officers and people in need to experience less trauma when they have interactions in crisis situations. People usually respond positively to being served by the most appropriate responders. We highly recommend that peer support and social workers lead the way in responding to Mainers during a crisis. When individuals are treated appropriately in a crisis, they are much more likely to reach out for support in the future if/when needed.

### **Here are some articles on law enforcement and social workers working together:**

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/sep/19/alexandria-kentucky-police-social-workers>
2. <https://rethinkcriminaljustice.com/mental-health-karena/>
3. <https://justsolutions.medium.com/everyone-benefits-when-police-departments-hire-social-workers-34d536f8802a>

### **Here are some articles on social workers and law enforcement officers: an exploration of this relationship:**

1. <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/3484zi02f>

### **Opinion: Three reasons to thoughtfully embed social workers into police departments**

1. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2020/09/25/importance-social-workers-law-enforcement/3504784001/>