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MAYOR LEE ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS SERVICES TO SUPPORT POLICE RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

San Francisco Police Department & San Francisco Department of Public Health Partnership Will Bring Behavioral Health Clinicians to the Crisis Scene to Prioritize the Sanctity of Life

San Francisco, CA—San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee joined San Francisco Police Department Interim Police Chief Toney Chaplin and the Department of Public Health Director Barbara Garcia to announce that San Francisco will deploy licensed mental health professionals to the scene of police encounters with troubled individuals as part of a partnership between the Department of Public Health and the San Francisco Police Department.

The new Crisis Intervention Specialists will support the de-escalation of conflict situations when police officers respond to individuals who may be mentally ill or under the influence of drugs or alcohol and pose a potential danger to themselves or others. The team will bring behavioral health expertise to critical incidents, support police at the scene, and assist with debriefing and crisis intervention trainings.

The program strengthens and expands the City's crisis response capabilities by providing professionals to support police negotiators and tactical staff. It is part of the City's ongoing police reforms and will emphasize the importance of protecting lives and assuring public safety for all San Francisco residents.

"The Crisis Intervention Specialists seek to accomplish peaceful resolutions to conflicts and to reduce harm," said Mayor Lee. "This is the latest reform that prioritizes the sanctity of life above all else."

The formation of Crisis Intervention Specialists builds on the Department of Public Health's more than a decade of crisis response services in the field. The team's expansion aims to support law enforcement in crisis situations involving mental health, and ensure that individuals are adequately assessed and provided mental health crisis services if needed. It will be implemented and evaluated based on factors such as the outcomes of negotiations and crisis assessments, short term case management services, linkage to long term care and reduction in crisis contacts.

"The Health Department believes that this program will support the Police Department's clinical knowledge and provide more health resources to bring meaningful change and improve safety for individuals with behavioral health problems, police officers involved in critical incidents and the community at large," said Barbara A. Garcia, Health Director.

"The Police Department is proud to work with the Department of Public Health on another program designed to bring crisis and mental health services to the community" said Toney Chaplin, Interim Chief of Police. "For many years, San Francisco Police officers have partnered with Mobile Crisis Treatment Teams and the

Comprehensive Child Crisis Services to help both adults and youth that are victims of homicide in our City. The Crisis Intervention Specialist Team will be one more resource that the Police Department can call to help persons in crisis and officers in the field to assure time and distance."

The team of Crisis Intervention Specialists will be made up of experienced behavioral health clinicians employed by the Department of Public Health. It will include five staff including clinical psychologists and behavioral health clinicians who are experienced and licensed in the behavioral health field. All members of the team will be capable of supporting police negotiators in the field, conducting crisis assessments, debriefing individuals affected, consulting with victims and providing other crisis response services as needed. Team members also will assist the police department with Crisis Intervention Trainings, building on the training already in place, to improve police capability to recognize people with behavioral health problems and restore safety.

The new team will be an expansion of the Health Department's Comprehensive Crisis Services unit, which includes the Mobile Crisis Treatment Team for field assessment, intervention and case management of adults, Comprehensive Child Crisis for field assessment, intervention and case management of children and Crisis Response Services for families, community members and individuals affected by violence and critical incidents.

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