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**CITYWIDE MENTAL HEALTH STEERING COMMITTEE TAKES STEPS ON POLICE REFORM,  
MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS RESPONSE**

*Mental health awareness training expands to the South Side, City launches Smart911 supports mental health emergency response*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced an expansion of mental health training and services aimed to improve crisis response for individuals with mental illness as part of the city's ongoing police reform. Following the success of a mental health outreach project in the West Side, the Citywide Mental Health Response Steering Committee is expanding the program to the South Side Roseland community. The program will provide free mental health awareness training to reduce stigma and better recognize the symptoms of a mental health crisis to support improved emergency response. In addition, the city is investing in Smart 911, to support accurate, timely and effective dispatch of emergency resources during a mental health crisis.

"Training first responders and meaningfully engaging with the community are two equally important parts of ensuring the city is providing an effective and compassionate mental health emergency response," said Mayor Emanuel. "Together, we can reduce stigma and better meet the needs of individuals who may be experiencing a mental health crisis."

The Mental Health Outreach Project is part of the city's efforts to improve crisis response through trauma-informed practices to better identify, serve and ultimately treat those individuals with mental health challenges during a crisis. The pilot project grew out of Mayor Emanuel's Citywide Mental Health Response Steering Committee, a coordinated effort between the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC), the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and mental health advocates to address how the city's first responders can better serve individuals facing mental health challenges. Last year, nearly 600 community members in Austin, Garfield Park and North Lawndale received free mental health awareness training to reduce stigma and provide information on emergency response resources. The successful pilot trained school staff, faith leaders, and staff and volunteers from community-based organizations in awareness and identification of the signs and symptoms of a possible mental health crisis. In addition, residents learned about support services available from the City and

community organizations, including the option to request a specially trained Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained police officer in the event of a crisis.

"For the last two years, we have been focused on making CPD a model agency in Crisis Intervention and this latest step of expanded mental health training for police officers allows us to provide quality public safety services to more affected individuals on the south and west sides of the city," said Superintendent Eddie Johnson. "We will continue our efforts to improve training and professional development so CPD can forge stronger relationships with all communities as we work to make Chicago safer."

These efforts build on collaborative citywide initiatives to improve mental health emergency response across the city. This has included training police officers and all OEMC 911 call takers and dispatchers in crisis intervention and de-escalation, as well as enhancements to the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. As a result of the heightened awareness, strengthened training and improved operations, the total number of CIT identified calls have grown, allowing CIT resources are being dispatched in much higher volume. This year, OEMC is on track to identify over 36,000 CIT events – a 537% increase over 911 CIT identified events in 2015.

"By strengthening our relationships with communities across Chicago through programs like this, we are continuing to make progress in the City's mental health response for everyone's safety," said OEMC's Executive Director, Alicia Tate-Nadeau. "The safety of residents, including those experiencing mental health symptoms, is a top priority for the City of Chicago and the Smart911, free national public safety service, will help us in that effort."

The city is also improving its mental health emergency response through the implementation of Smart 911. A key recommendation of the Police Accountability Task Force report on police reform, the Office of Emergency Management and Communications, is launching Smart911, a free, voluntary and secure service to help families and facilities plan for an emergency. By creating a Safety Profile, residents can include critical personal and family details such as disabilities, behavioral and medical notes, and possible mental health triggers so that first responders will have more information to better assess emergency situations and mental health crises. Smart911 is private and secure and the information is only used in an emergency.

"Chicago is committed to ensuring individuals facing mental health challenges receive the support and services they need by building a responsive mental health system and removing obstacles to care," said CDPH Commissioner Julie Morita, M.D.

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Jane Addams College of Social Work evaluated the effectiveness of this training on the West Side. UIC researchers confirmed that the pilot showed decreased stigma associated with mental illness, increased knowledge and comfort in contacting a CIT trained police officer, increased knowledge about mental health and increased confidence that they could assist someone in need. Importantly, among those that participated in follow-up surveys, the improvements maintained overtime. Additionally, of the 505 people who participated in the

study, nearly 70 percent said that either they personally have, or a family member has, experienced mental health challenges. This underscores the importance of reducing stigma and preparing members of the targeted communities to recognize and link individuals experiencing mental health difficulties to appropriate resources. The final report from the West Side Project can be found here: <http://thekennedyforumillinois.org/west-side-community-outreach-pilot-project-evaluation-results/>

“This project is no longer a pilot. Based on the evaluation of the Westside Outreach Project we now know now we have a model that works to effectively reduce stigma and improve crisis response in our communities,” said Kennedy Forum Executive Director Kelly O’Brien. “Expanding this work in the Roseland community is one important next step in what we hope will be a continued commitment to train thousands of residents in communities across the City.”

UIC led the pre-and-post evaluations of the effectiveness of the trainings, which were provided by Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago: Center for Childhood Resilience, Laynie Foundation, National Alliance for Mentally Ill (NAMI) Chicago, Presence Health, Sinai Health System: Under the Rainbow, Thresholds and Trilogy Behavioral Healthcare. The pilot is funded through the Chicago Department of Public Health.

“The evaluation showed that members of the targeted communities engaged in the trainings and benefited in terms of reduced stigma and increased knowledge,” said Amy Watson, PhD, UIC Jane Addams College of Social Work. “They are now better prepared to assist themselves and others to access help in the event of mental health difficulties or crises.”

The Citywide Mental Health Response Steering Committee includes representatives from the Mayor’s Office, Chicago Police Department, Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC), Chicago Fire Department, Chicago Department of Public Health, NAMI Chicago, The Kennedy Forum, Thresholds, Mount Sinai Health System and University of Illinois at Chicago. The Steering Committee continues to meet monthly to address its goals of improving training, increasing access to social services, reducing the stigma of mental health, educating the public on mental health first response, and collecting better data on outcomes.

“Information is power,” said President of Human Resources Development Insititute (HRDI) Joel K. Johnson. “The better we inform our community, and make them aware of mental health Disorders, treatment opportunities, and organizations that can assist them, the faster we can tear down the barriers that prevent health and recovery. Stigma is our enemy.”

Partners in the Greater Roseland Project project include: Alderwoman Austin, Alderman Beale, Alderwoman Sadlowski-Garza, Camelot Excel Academies, Catholic Charities, Chicago Beyond, Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police Department, Far South Side Community Action Council, GMC Power, Greater Roseland Chamber of Commerce, GreaterWorks Inc., HRDI - Human Resources Development Institute, The Kennedy Forum Illinois, Kids Off the Block, Mercy Housing Lakefront, Metropolitan Family Services, NAMI

Chicago, Olive Harvey College, Phalanx Family Services, PowerHouse Church, Pullman CDC, Roseland Community Hospital, Roseland Lighthouse, Sertoma Centre, SGA Family Services, South Side Help Center, SS Peter & Paul, The Chicago Community Trust, U.S. Congresswoman Kelly, University of Illinois-Chicago, and Wesley & Edwin, LLC.

"Metropolitan Family Services is proud to partner with the Kennedy Forum, the City of Chicago, our Behavioral Health Consortium partner HRDI, and other partner agencies to bring emergency behavioral health services to Roseland," says Audrena Spence, Executive Director of Metropolitan Family Services Calumet Center. "This is a major opportunity to help promote the community's wellbeing and break down barriers to receiving treatment."

This year, the city launched [www.chicagoconnects.org](http://www.chicagoconnects.org) which helps residents to identify citywide behavioral health resources about substance use, mental health and violence prevention services.

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