



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

Contact: Mayor's Office of Communications, mayorspressoffice@sfgov.org

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**SAN FRANCISCO CELEBRATES ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
OF STREET CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM**

Street Crisis Response Team has responded to over 5,000 calls related to people suffering from mental health and substance use issues on City streets

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed, the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), and the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) today marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Street Crisis Response Team (SCRT). SCRT has grown from a single team supporting the Tenderloin neighborhood to six teams providing San Francisco with 24/7 citywide coverage in one year. SCRT responds rapidly to people who are having a crisis on City streets with a behavioral health approach that deescalates situations and addresses a person's immediate needs for care, treatment, and shelter.

Data from the year show that SCRT has taken more than 5,000 calls and engaged with nearly 3,000 people in crisis. In early 2022, a seventh team with six additional staff will launch.

"The Street Crisis Response Team has proven that we can respond to calls of people in crisis with compassion and clinical skills without having to rely on emergency rooms, ambulances, and law enforcement," said Mayor Breed. "Getting to the point when we can respond to everyone in need without continuing the cycle that keeps them in and out of our emergency rooms or our jails is going to take time. This anniversary is an important step forward and proves to cities and counties across the country seeking to replicate our model that it works."

Demonstrating the program's success as an alternative to law enforcement, SCRT diverted more than one-third of all 911 calls (38%) for "mentally disturbed persons" from law enforcement cumulatively during its first year of operation. With six teams launched, SCRT is now diverting over half (58%) of calls monthly for "mentally disturbed persons" from law enforcement. Once fully operational, SCRT seeks to divert 100% of calls.

"San Francisco is responding urgently with new approaches to transform how we deliver care to those hardest to reach and most in need," said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. "Rather than wait for people to come to us, we are finding new, innovative ways of removing barriers to care by taking services directly to people in need. The Street Crisis Response Team shows that this approach works, and will build on our learnings from this first year of operation to further increase access to services and connect even more people in crisis to the resources they need."

"The San Francisco Fire Department and our Community Paramedicine Division are incredibly proud of what SCRT has accomplished in its first year of operation," said Chief Jeanine



Nicholson of the San Francisco Fire Department. “Community Paramedicine is an emerging field in health care where paramedics operate in expanded roles to connect underserved populations to care. SCRT, like other community paramedicine programs of the San Francisco Fire Department, increase our ability to promote health and social equity among those with unmet medical, mental health, and social needs.”

Each SCRT team is staffed with a community paramedic from SFFD, a behavioral health clinician from HealthRIGHT360, and a peer specialist with lived experience from RAMS, Inc. (Richmond Area Multi-Services) who together have the range of specialty skills to engage on scene with a person in crisis. As of April 2021, SCRT is supported by a dedicated follow-up team that provides coordinated care linkages, often within 24-hours of the initial encounter. Since April, nearly a third (31%) of all people who interact with SCRT are successfully re-engaged with follow-up care such as being connected to a provider or treatment program.

SCRT is an important component of the City's Mental Health SF initiative for improving the mental healthcare for people experiencing homelessness. Most people who SCRT serves (76%) are currently experiencing homelessness, a condition that puts them at significantly higher risk for negative health outcomes and creates challenges in accessing services and long-term mental health and medical care. SCRT's street-based response offers a different approach from the traditional facility-based care by delivering support directly to communities.

If you see someone in a crisis, please call 911 and describe what you are seeing to the trained operators with the San Francisco Department of Emergency Services (DEM).

More information about SCRT can be found at: sf.gov/street-crisis-response-team

###