



RESOLUTION 2024-03

Financial Resources for Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) in Ontario

Preamble:

Since 1999, police and health partners have been working alongside one another to support individuals in crisis. More recently, since approximately 2016, mobile crisis response team models have emerged as an important innovation for community safety and well-being in Ontario. These integrated MCRTs bring together law enforcement and mental health professionals to respond to persons in crisis and have become a vital part of the crisis response continuum in Ontario. These teams enhance immediate 24/7 emergency response and employ de-escalation in crisis situations, which fosters long-term community trust and often shifts perspectives of police interactions in mental health.

MCRTs provide a coordinated response, immediate support, connections to community resources, and effective follow-up care by the right service providers, which often reduces repeat interactions with police. MCRTs play a crucial role in reducing Mental Health Act apprehensions by police and diverting individuals in crisis from costly hospital emergency department visits and hospitalization.

Recognizing the value, the Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee released in 2019 the *Mobile Crisis Response Teams in Ontario: A Provincial Framework and Toolkit*. The work was the result of a comprehensive provincial working group of key stakeholders and was endorsed by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Solicitor General. This work was so important that between 2019 and 2024, the Government of Ontario established a variety of funding sources to support the establishment, enhancement, and sustainability of some MCRTs in Ontario. Moreover, the collaborative nature of these partnerships between police and mental health providers has evolved to co-create innovations such as call diversion and ongoing innovations in crisis response rooted in a trauma-informed and culturally responsive approach.

It is critical to maintain and foster ongoing relationships with a shared vision for community safety and well-being and evidence-based decision-making. It is critical for all partners to promote transparency, understanding, and coordinate efforts in operational decision-making and that adequate funding is available to ensure the ongoing success of the MCRT program.

WHEREAS integrated Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRTs) that involve police working in collaboration with a health partner agency to attend police calls involving persons in crisis have been/are being established throughout Ontario and

WHEREAS MCRTs have been developing and evolving in communities across Ontario since 2014 and vary in naming conventions, types of models, partnerships, and

WHEREAS not every community in Ontario has an established MCRT due to a lack of adequate resources and partners, including funding and

WHEREAS 63 unique responses to the Provincial Human Services Justice Coordinating Committee in their 2024 survey identified 89 integrated MCRT teams with police across Ontario (May 13, 2024), and

WHEREAS an environmental scan of diversion rates across multiple police services shows that involvement of an MCRT results in a greater than 70% diversion rate from hospital emergency departments and

WHEREAS multiple Coroner's Inquest recommendations since 2018 call for the establishment and enhancement of integrated MCRTs, and

WHEREAS the purpose of an integrated MCRT is to support improved outcomes for persons in crisis, where police are called and obligated to attend, by:

- Police and a mental health partner agency collaborating to deliver integrated services to improve pathways and experiences for persons in crisis
- Providing de-escalation, community assessment, and referrals
- Improving police-hospital transitions where a person in crisis requires an apprehension under the *Mental Health Act*; and
- Diverting individuals from unnecessary hospital emergency department visits, and

WHEREAS, in the absence of a provincial mental health crisis emergency response tier with integrated communications and dispatch for 24/7 civilian-led, non-police MCRT's, police remain the primary 24/7 default emergency response available in rural, urban, and isolated fly-in communities, and

WHEREAS integrated MCRT's must consider police operations and the obligation to provide policing functions such as public safety and well-being under the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* and each Ontario police service's respective policies and procedures, and

WHEREAS integrated MCRT involving police and health partner agencies is supported through the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ontario Health base funding, the Ministry of the Solicitor General grant funding, and/or other funding sources, and

WHEREAS the *Community Safety Policing Act, 2019* directs any Ontario police service that has a mobile mental health and addictions crisis team to establish procedures respecting its functions, and the provision of those functions.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the OACP calls upon the Government of Ontario to engage in cross-ministerial financial coordination to communicate the integrated mobile crisis response funding allocations to both police and mental health partner agency recipients to ensure:

- Transparency;
- evidence-based decision-making;
- equitable planning;
- maintenance of positive working relationships; and
- that resource planning and fiscal responsibility are supported.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a standardized MOU template should be established between police and mental health partner agencies, which will set out the terms and conditions for procedures, operations, and evaluation, and which will provide financial transparency to support an equitable, evidence-based, collaborative approach to the delivery of integrated MCRT services.