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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES COMPREHENSIVE REFORMS TO IMPROVE CRISIS INTERVENTION SITUATIONS

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today comprehensive reforms to address how the City's first responders can best serve individuals with mental illness. The reform efforts are based on advice and assistance provided by the Mayor's brand new steering committee called the Citywide Mental Health Response Steering Committee, which is comprised of City officials, service providers and mental health experts. As Chicago works to address how best to serve individuals with mental illness, the City is taking a holistic look at all aspects of response -- from 911 call takers and dispatchers, to police training and de-escalation tactics, to service delivery.

The reforms will improve and expand the City's crisis intervention team training (CIT) already in place, and will help to ensure that first responders have the information, skills and training necessary to de-escalate interactions when possible.

The Steering Committee has agreed to the following initial reforms announced today:

- **Expand Crisis Intervention Team program capacity by 50%:** The Chicago Police Department (CPD) Crisis Intervention Team training is a 40-hour certification on techniques and best practices to de-escalate interactions with individuals in crisis, particularly people with mental illnesses. The training has been shown to help defuse crises and reduce the use of force and risk of injury. As part of the new reform efforts, in 2016 the CPD will expand the number of officers fully certified in CIT by 50 percent from 1,890 to 2,800, with continued CIT training planned for subsequent years. CPD will also continue its mandate that each district has at least one CIT-certified officer staffed on every watch.
- **CIT Certification for Supervisors:** Going forward, CPD will require full CIT certification for all Field Training Officers and new promotional classes. This will ensure that supervisors responding to incidents and those responsible for training new recruits are fully trained in CIT protocol and techniques.
- **Training for all Officers:** Working with mental health experts, CPD will create and implement an 8-hour, in-service training on mental health awareness for all police officers. This training will be part of the 16 hours of training on de-escalation and use of

force tactics announced earlier this year, and will include both classroom instruction and live, scenario-based training.

- Training for 911: Working with mental health experts, OEMC will develop improved training for 911 operators and dispatchers to assist them with identifying situations requiring crisis intervention tactics and dispatch the appropriate resources. Going forward, 911 call takers and dispatchers will receive this in-service training annually.
- Data and evaluation: The OEMC, Chicago Department of Public Health, CPD and CFD will work together to increase collection of information regarding the number and types of responses related to mental health incidents. Increased data collection will help identify opportunities to improve policies and resource allocations specific to mental health related responses. It will also help the Steering Committee evaluate the City's response to individuals in crisis.
- Improved Access to Services: The City will collaborate with mental health experts and community partners to explore new models for improving immediate access to mental health services when individuals interact with police and other first-responders.

“Making sure that Chicago’s first responders have the right training, practice, and preparations to de-escalate crisis situations safely and effectively is one of the most essential things that we can do to keep every Chicagoan safe,” said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “The efforts we are announcing today are part of the City’s commitment to improving its emergency response training, and ensuring that those in need of mental health services are getting the care they need most.”

The new Citywide Mental Health Response Steering Committee was assembled by the Mayor to recommend reforms to the City’s training and response to individuals with mental illness, develop new ideas for improved service delivery, implement reforms and policy recommendations, and help evaluate the City’s progress. The Committee includes representatives from Mayor’s Office, Chicago Police Department, Office of Emergency Management and Communications, Chicago Fire Department, Department of Public Health, National Alliance on Mental Illness Chicago, The Kennedy Forum, Thresholds, and University of Illinois at Chicago. The group will engage additional service providers, hospitals, and stakeholders in the coming weeks.

“The commitment by the City to expand the CIT training and two-day training for all patrol officers is a very important and necessary step toward changing police interactions with all residents,” said Alexa James, the Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Chicago. “CIT has been a successful training program, but the City needed to invest more resources to expand and strengthen it.”

These efforts build on Mayor Emanuel and the Chicago Police Department’s recent overhaul in how officers respond to incidents, which is now centered around de-escalation tactics to reduce the intensity of a conflict or a potentially violent situation at the earliest possible moment. This overhaul in training, as well as today’s announcement, emphasize that the foremost goal of first responders is to protect the safety of all involved.

"In recent weeks the impact of stigma and untreated mental illness and addiction have become painfully visible in our City, with first responders on the front lines," said Kelly O'Brien, Executive Director of The Kennedy Forum Illinois. "We're encouraged that the process of identifying solutions has included candid discussions with community stakeholders and that these immediate steps to protect and support both residents and first responders are consistent with our recommendations."

"The vast majority of officers will encounter someone who needs crisis intervention," said Mark Ishaug, CEO of Thresholds. "We look forward to working with City stakeholders to explore new ways to connect those residents to high-quality services that prevent them from unnecessarily entering emergency rooms and jails."

Chicago's overall mental health system — operated and funded through the combined efforts of the City's Department of Public Health, state agencies, the federal government, healthcare systems and nonprofit organizations — works to ensure that the City's most vulnerable residents have access to quality mental health services that promote their health and well-being. Over the last four years, CDPH has made or helped secured millions of dollars in new investments to increase services and options for Chicago residents, including youth and those most in need.

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