

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEEL TAKES STEPS TO CHANGE WAY 911 CALLS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CRISES ARE HANDLED

July 23, 2020 (Brampton, Ontario) – Peel recently took the first steps to change the way mental health crisis 911 calls are addressed in the community.

Regional Council unanimously endorsed a motion that calls for a community-developed plan to put more Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Teams on Peel streets. Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Teams partner a crisis worker from Canadian Mental Health Association – Peel Dufferin with a specially trained Peel Regional Police officer to defuse and de-escalate 911 calls for mental health crises.

The motion also calls for advocacy to change the Provincial Mental Health Act to allow mental health services to lead crisis responses in urgent mental health situations, where appropriate.

“People experiencing a mental health crisis need health care, but our system simply isn’t set up to deliver the help they need in those moments of desperation. It’s time to accelerate change,” said Regional Councillor Johanna Downey, Chair of the Health Services committee.

Under current legislation, police are required to lead interventions for 911 calls for mental health crises but acknowledge that mental health should not be a policing issue. Changes to legislation to formally empower mental health workers to lead during crises puts health care for people at the forefront of response.

Chronic underfunding of mental health and addiction supports has left Peel residents with too few options and long wait times for mental health services in the community. In 2019, Peel residents seeking counselling and intensive treatments waited 737 days for service, the longest in the province. Today, Peel Regional Police respond to 16-17 for mental health interventions every day.

“We want a Peel where there are no more tragic deaths. Peel intends to lead change, so healthcare is prioritized for people in crisis,” continued Regional Councillor Dipika Damerla, Vice-Chair of the Health Services committee.

The Peel Community Safety and Well-Being planning table is collaborating with Peel Regional Police, community safety and mental health agencies, and the to develop the plan. An update on progress is expected later this year.

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For more information

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