

Greenville Police Department is expanding its partnership with mental health experts



GREENVILLE, N.C. (WNCT) – Greenville Police Department officials are talking about the change in how they respond to calls involving mental health concerns.

Mobile crisis services are nothing new in Pitt County.

It's been around for 12 years, but police Chief Mark Holtzman believes his department can do a better job of using available resources and getting information to people.

Chief Holtzman says, "We're good at what we do, but there are experts in that field and it's how we bring those experts out with us to the field in a safe manner to provide the highest level of service to the community."

The change involves working more closely with Trillium and integrated family services.

“Trillium Health Resources does a great deal of funding for services like integrated family services that does mobile crisis,” says Dave Peterson with Trillium Health Resources.

The mobile crisis teams will play a key role, helping officers by phone or in person at an emergency scene.

“What we’re going to do is reach out to our partners in mobile crisis, call them immediately and ask them to join us at the home,” explains Chief Holtzman.

The teams act as backup, ready to reach out to someone needing immediate mental health care.

Mona Townes works with Integrated Family Services, she says, “What our hope is, is to be that bridge and to almost be that connection and collaborate between the two organizations to be able to better respond to individuals in the community who are facing behavioral health crisis situations.”

The Pitt County Sheriff’s office will also begin working with the mobile crisis team in the coming weeks.

Officials say this could also help in schools.

“Bringing mobile crisis in with our school resource officers is something that the sheriff has been very integral in doing and something we see growing in the future,” says Holtzman.

Eventually, the idea is to have the crisis team respond to emergencies at the same time as police.

Mobile Crisis services are not exclusively available to law enforcement.

Their services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to anyone, regardless of insurance, living in the following counties: Beaufort, Bertie, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Currituck, Craven, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, and Washington.

The number to call is 1-866-437-1821



Copyright 2020 Nexstar Broadcasting, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.