



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2022
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SC Department of Mental Health to Expand Mobile Crisis Services

Columbia, SC – The South Carolina Department of Mental Health has received a grant of \$3 million to expand mobile crisis services in 10 high-need counties. The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) made the award as part of a funding opportunity for Community Crisis Response Partnerships.

The award of \$750,000 annually for four years will allow SCDMH to expand its existing Mobile Crisis program by adding certified peer support specialists to co-respond with master-level clinicians to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and provide follow-up. In addition, at least one law enforcement agency in each of the ten counties will receive funding for tablets and data service plans to facilitate using telehealth services with Mobile Crisis. Doing so will increase law enforcement's options for including mental health professionals as they respond to incidents with mental health components.

SCDMH has begun planning the expansion, which will include: Abbeville, Aiken, Anderson, Chesterfield, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda counties. "These funds will allow us to increase crisis services in areas we have identified as high-need according to reported suicide rates as well as rural areas," said Beckman Center for Mental Health Services Executive Director Melanie Gambrell. "In addition, the inclusion of certified peer support specialists not only helps increase our available Mobile Crisis staff but also means that in addition to a clinician, individuals in crisis will have someone on-site who understands, often firsthand, what they are going through."

Mobile Crisis is a statewide, 24/7/365 program created by SCDMH to enhance its crisis services array by providing statewide capacity for on-site, emergency, psychiatric screening and assessment. Program goals are to provide access and link those experiencing psychiatric crises to appropriate levels of care, reduce hospitalizations, and reduce unnecessary emergency department visits. Mobile Crisis builds and maintains partnerships with local law enforcement, hospital systems, judges, other social service agencies, community providers, and other mental health providers. SCDMH Mobile Crisis is available toll-free at (833) 364-2274.

The SCDMH's mission is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses. The Department provides clinical services to approximately 100,000 patients each year, about 30,000 of whom are children. As South Carolina's public mental health system, SCDMH provides outpatient mental health care through a network of 16 community mental health centers and associated clinics serving all 46 counties and inpatient psychiatric treatment in three state hospitals. In addition to mental health services, SCDMH provides nursing care to eligible veterans through a network of state veterans nursing homes.

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