



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Tracy LaPointe

(803) 898-8582

[Tracy.LaPointe@scdmh.org](mailto:Tracy.LaPointe@scdmh.org)

## **Lexington County Community Mental Health Center announces new program with West Columbia and Cayce Police Departments**

Lexington, SC – Lexington County Community Mental Health Center (LCCMHC), West Columbia Police Department, and Cayce Police Department are partnering to embed a mental health professional (MHP) from the Center to work alongside officers in the community.

Law enforcement officers often respond to incidents in our communities involving individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis and frequently encounter victims of crimes who are experiencing trauma. A mental health professional on the scene can provide immediate mental health interventions, which often result in the de-escalation of crises, diversions from jail, and connecting people to the treatment services that they need. Embedding an MHP with law enforcement also increases collaboration with victim advocates post-incident, allowing for earlier interventions and reducing the likelihood of longer-term trauma.

Executive Director of the LCCMHC Sarah Main shared, “Our Center has partnered with law enforcement through our Mobile Crisis program since 2019. We are excited to expand our collaboration by embedding a mental health professional, who will allow us to respond faster to crises in the community and provide proactive interventions to prevent crises from occurring. This new initiative will enable us to better serve our patients and community.”

Chief Chris Cowan of the Cayce Police Department said, “This is another outstanding example of how partnerships and cooperation can improve the quality of life for our citizens. The Cayce Police Department and West Columbia Police Department continue to work together; the addition of this clinician to our teams will bring direct mental health services to our communities, help our patrol officers assist our citizens, and improve the quality of life for our cities.”

Chief Marion Boyce of the West Columbia Police Department shared, "I am pleased to see the collaboration between the West Columbia and Cayce Police Departments in the implementation of this new mental health initiative. This will allow us to better serve our communities and provide much-needed support to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. We are committed to serving everyone and this is yet another example of how we provide a quality law enforcement service to those in need."

The Lexington County Community Mental Health Center, one of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health’s 16 community-based, outpatient mental health centers, provides services to adults, children, adolescents, and families in Lexington County. In 2023, the Center provided 56,364 services to more than 5,600 people. To make services as accessible as possible, LCCMHC has clinics in Lexington, Batesburg, and Swansea. The Center has also embedded mental health professionals in 71 Lexington County schools.

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