



The City of Half Moon Bay, in partnership with El Centro de Libertad and the County of San Mateo, has launched the Crisis Assistance Response and Evaluation Services (CARES) pilot program.

The CARES team responds to 911 calls involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The team consists of a certified emergency medical technician (EMT) and an experienced behavioral health care clinician.

The CARES team is **specially trained** on the use of culturally competent de-escalation, crisis intervention, motivational interviewing, and suicide prevention tools to work with individuals in crisis. **Bilingual services** are provided in Spanish and English.

Following initial assessment, the CARES team provides clinical interventions, **in-person “warm” handoffs** to service providers, and follow-up to ensure individuals and families have the support they need while navigating care systems. Ongoing collaboration with local and regional non-profits, government agencies, and the community will be key to the success of the program, and the long-term success of its participants.

The CARES team is dispatched in instances where there is no immediate threat of violence, with Sheriff's Deputies on standby when a higher level of response is needed. **Types of calls** appropriate for the CARES team include suicidal ideations, persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol, persons experiencing a mental health crisis, parents calling with concern for an adolescent exhibiting unusual behavior, or community members reporting persons in some form of emotional distress.

The CARES team response is an alternative to law enforcement, fire, or other first responders. Comparable programs have shown that this kind of response to behavioral health emergencies helps divert individuals from costly visits to emergency rooms and unnecessary entry into the criminal justice system and helps **prevent the physical harm or loss of life** that sometimes result from armed crisis response.

This pilot program is sponsored by the City of Half Moon Bay and County of San Mateo.

Program Highlights

911 DISPATCHES THE CARES TEAM TO MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED CALLS

CARES TEAM ASSESSES, DE-ESCALATES, AND STABILIZES

PARTICIPANTS ARE LINKED TO THE CARE THEY NEED

CARES TEAM PROVIDES NEXT DAY FOLLOW-UP

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