

2021

# **MENTAL HEALTH UNIT**

**MADISON POLICE  
DEPARTMENT**

## MENTAL HEALTH UNIT (MHU) OVERVIEW

The mission of the Madison Police Department Mental Health Unit (MPD MHU) is to provide a coordinated, professional and compassionate police response to individuals affected by mental illness and their families. The MHU works collaboratively with partner agencies to achieve improved outcomes for individuals affected by mental illnesses or suffering a crisis by connecting them to needed services and diverting them away from the criminal justice system whenever possible. The goal of the Mental Health Unit is to improve safety for officers and all members of the community and reduce calls for police service related to mental illness issues.

The foundation of MPD's overall mental health programing is our well-trained patrol officers. All MPD Officers receive more training in our in-house, pre-service academy on mental health and behavioral health crisis topics than the national standard for specialist mental health officers. Our patrol officers are supplemented by Mental Health Liaison Officers (MHL's). These MHLs remain in their primary assignments, but receive additional training throughout the year.

The MHU also consists of six full-time, Mental Health Officers (MHO) - one for each of the six police districts - three embedded Law Enforcement Crisis Workers (LECW), the above-mentioned MHLs, one Sergeant, and one LECW manager. The MHU falls under the command of the Captain of Community Outreach. MHOs and Crisis Workers collaborate with MHLs and patrol officers to improve outcomes in mental health related police calls for service.

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## MENTAL HEALTH UNIT VALUES

**Problem solving:** We believe in identifying the underlying issues creating police calls and reducing them.

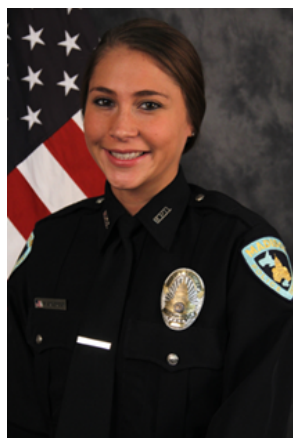
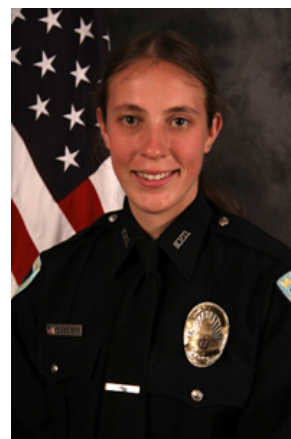
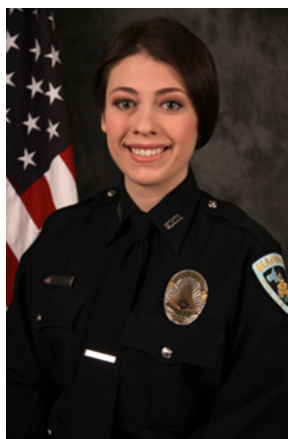
**Collaboration:** We engage with partners from across the government, civil society, families and consumers to improve systems, relationships, and outcomes.

**Diversion:** We aim to reduce the involvement of criminal justice in mental health issues and the criminalization of mental illness.

**Professional development:** We seek increased knowledge and expertise within the unit and to share our knowledge and experience with the department at large.

## MEET OUR TEAM

Mental Health Officers (MHO), Law Enforcement Crisis Workers (LECW) and unit leadership, left to right: Captain Matt Tye - Community Outreach Commander, Sergeant Sarah Shimko, MHO Brenna Puestow - East District, MHO Casey Amoroso - Central District, MHO Hannah Johnson - West District, MHO Charles Pratt - South District, MHO Michelle Hanson - Midtown District, LECW Sarah Henrickson - Clinical Team Manager, LECW Kayla Stotts - West/Midtown, LECW Malorie Elmer - Central/South, and LECW Hope Edgren - East/North.



MHLs volunteer to take on additional responsibilities and respond to mental health related police calls for service when available. In contrast with MHOs, MHLs remain in their primary assignment on a full time basis. Together with fellow patrol officers, MHLs work within and across districts to provide a coordinated, consistent, and collaborative response. Their responsibilities include coordinating efforts with partner agencies; engaging residents living with mental illnesses; and attending relevant community meetings. MHLs provide valuable continuity by providing MHOs direct information on calls occurring outside the MHO's shift. The MHLs dedication to servicing mental health related calls, combined with their additional expertise, provide an invaluable service to MPD and the Madison community. Interest in the MHL role has seen consistent growth since the inception of the program in 2004. In 2021 we had a record 47 MHLs.



Members of the 2021 MHU together at our June 2021 full team training

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## TRAINING RECEIVED BY MHOS AND MHLs

The MHU Sergeant along with MHOs and LECWs developed and implemented one, eight hour, in-person training for MHLs in 2021. Forty-three individuals attended this training on June 9th; Forty MPD officers, and three Journey Mental Health LECWs. Topics covered during this training included Collaborative Conversation between Law Enforcement and Crisis; a virtual reality scenario; refresher on Mental Health Bulletins; an Overview of Dane County's new Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC) and an update on the City of Madison's Crisis Alternative Response Emergency Services (CARES) pilot program.

Our five MHOs received a total of 286 hours of mental health and/or crisis response related training this year. Some trainings attended included Crisis Intervention Team, Suicide Risk Assessment, Threat Assessment: A Behavior-Based Approach, and Motivational Interviewing for Public Health & Safety.





The above photos were taken during the virtual reality crisis scenario portion. MHLs and MHOs had the opportunity to MHLs and MHOs also attended Policing the Teen Brain (Strategies for Youth), a two-day, evidence based training through Strategies for Youth. Two sessions were held to accommodate everyone; one on August 23rd and 24th, the second on September 28th and 29th.

## **POLICE-MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATION NATIONAL LEARNING SITE**

MPD's MHU is one of only fourteen Police-Mental Health learning sites selected by the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. We hosted three, in-person site visits this year. Personnel from Beaver Dam, WI, Dubuque, IA Police Department, and Sun Prairie, WI Police Departments all visited to learn more about MPD's MHU and our collaboration efforts, policies and procedures, training, data collection and analysis, etc.

Additional PMHC Learning Site related activities included fielding requests for information, from 12 different Law Enforcement or Social Service agencies from five states, on various topics including collaboration strategies, training, development of policies and procedures, etc.

## New Initiative

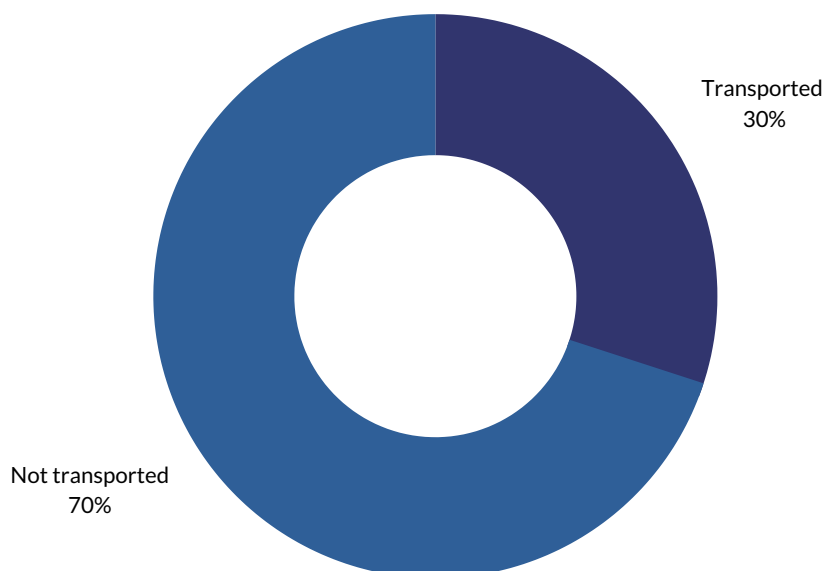
# VIRTUAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSESMENT

MPD's MHU, in collaboration with Journey Mental Health's Emergency Services Unit, launched a Virtual Mental Health Assessment Initiative in July of this year. The goal of this initiative is to minimize the need for citizens to be transported to a different location, sometimes involuntarily, for the purposes of further assessment.

17 Mental Health Liaison Officers (MHLs) were issued smart phones and the five Mental Health Officers (MHOs) had previously been issued smartphones as part of their assignment. These 22 officers were trained on how to collaborate with Journey Crisis Workers to determine when virtual assessments were possible and appropriate to facilitate through Journey's secure virtual meeting software. This new option equips officers in the field to facilitate virtual mental health assessments when appropriate and feasible.

Ten virtual assessments were completed between July 12th and November 6th 2021. Of the ten individuals assessed, only three required transport to a local emergency department for further assessment. Six virtual assessments were completed by MHOs and four were completed by MHLs.

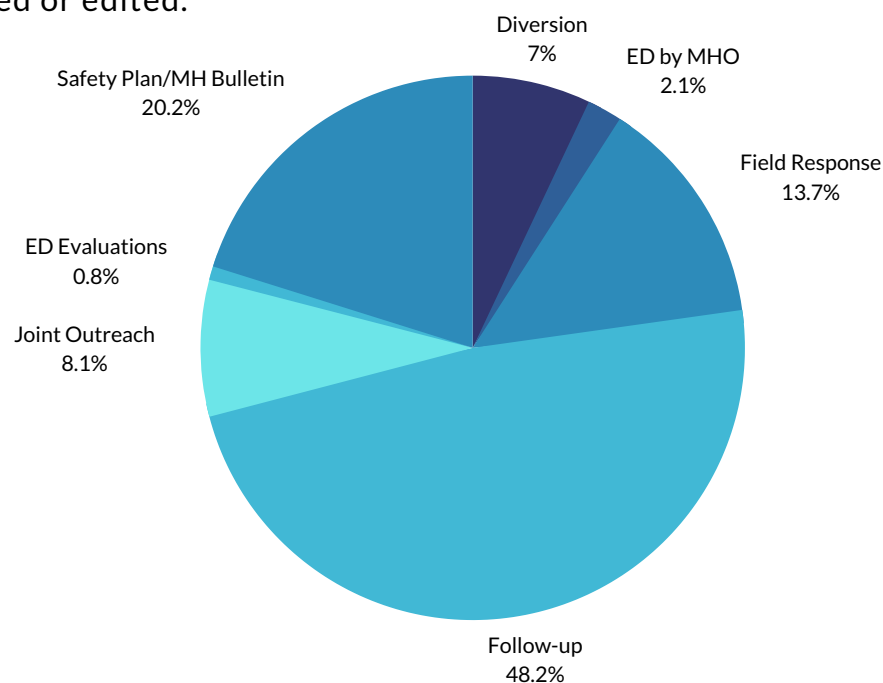
The next phase of this initiative is to equip all MHLs with smartphones and train them, as well as all patrol supervisors, all of whom have smartphones, on how to facilitate virtual assessments.



## MHU Activity Overview

# OVERALL ACTIVITY

The MHU operated most of the year with the East District MHO spot vacant and had only one LECW for much of the year. In 2021, MHOs and LECWs worked with 425 distinct individuals and conducted a total of 1111 distinct activities. Activities included 152 responses to active patrol calls, 78 instances of diverting calls from patrol, 23 Emergency Detentions (ED) completed primarily by MHO, 9 ED Evaluations not resulting in an ED, 535 follow-up activities of various duration, 90 joint outreach activities with Crisis Workers, and 224 safety plans or mental health bulletins created or edited.



## FREQUENCY RELATED TO SUBJECTS RECEIVING MHU SERVICES

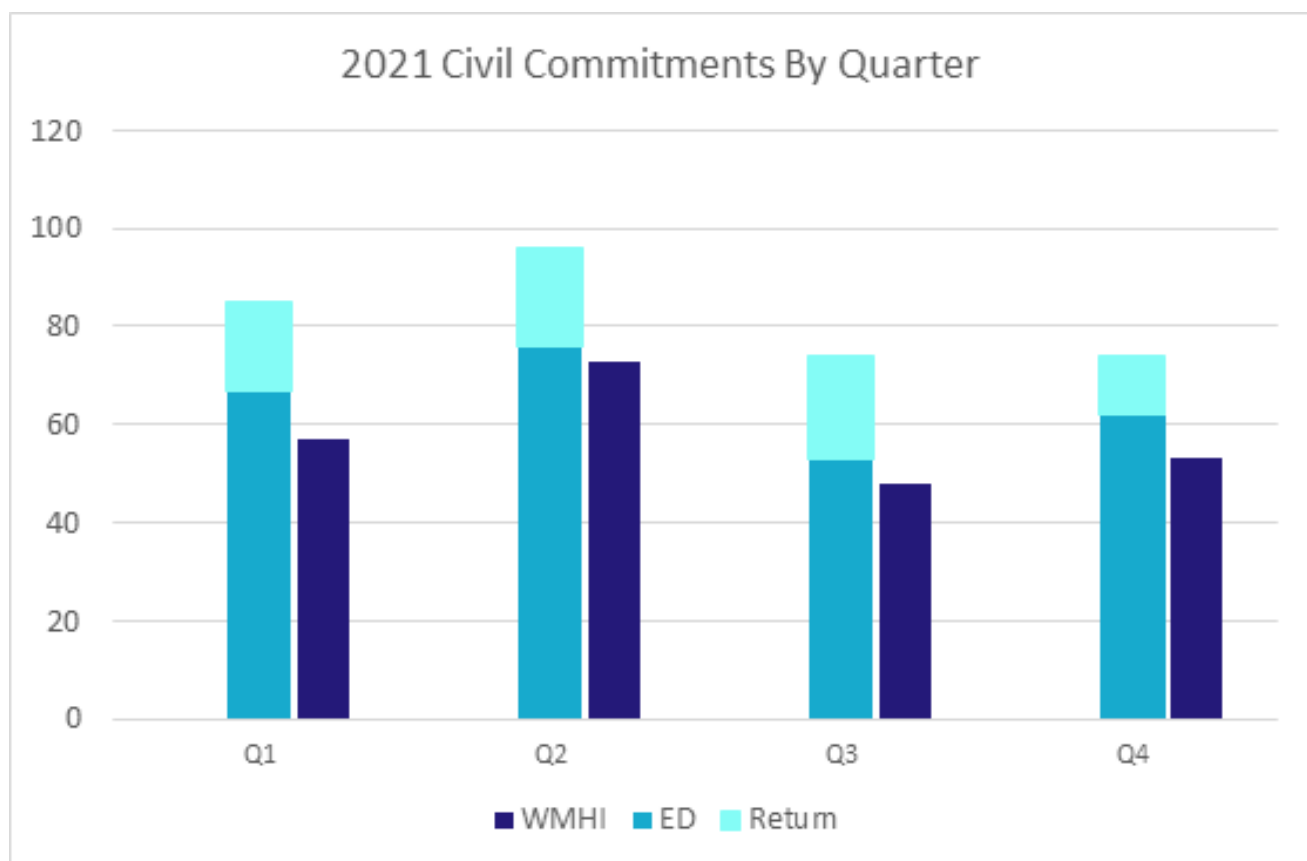
Approximately 8% of the total activities were directed to the top five subjects receiving MHU services. The individual who received the most follow up from MHU involved 27 case activities. The top 5% most-frequently contacted subjects received a total of approximately 24% of all MHU activity, and the top 10% received approximately 38%. 51% of subjects whose cases came to the attention of the MHU garnered only one activity.

The average subject received 2.6 contacts, though this is skewed by the number receiving just one contact. Excluding subjects who received just one activity, the average MHU activity per subject is 4.3 contacts.

## 2021 CHAPTER 51 ACTIVITY

The Madison Police Department as a whole performed 258 new civil processes – almost entirely new emergency detentions under Chapter 51; though MPD does effect a small number of three party petitions and alcohol commitments annually. MPD also took people into custody on 71 occasions for commitment returns – this occurs when an individual is out of compliance with the terms of their outpatient commitment or in violation of their Settlement Agreement terms. Out of a total of 331 Chapter 51 related activities, MPD transported patients to Winnebago Mental Health Institute 231 times, approximately 70% of the time.

MHOs were the actual authorizing officer on 23 emergency detentions, or approximately 9%. This does not include cases that MHOs assisted patrol officers in assessment, medical clearance, coordination efforts, etc., but did not formally sign the emergency detention order.





## CHAPTER 51 ACTIVITY YEAR BY YEAR COMPARISON

Chapter 51 Activity has remained relatively consistent over a number of years. In 2017 MPD completed 201 new civil commitments – primarily emergency detentions, 60 commitment returns and made 175 conveyances to Winnebago Mental Health Institute. In 2018, 185 new civil commitments, 68 commitment returns and 173 conveyances to Winnebago Mental Health Institute were completed. In 2019, 192 new civil commitments, 74 commitment returns and 166 conveyances to Winnebago Mental Health Institute were completed. In 2020, 184 new civil commitments, 56 commitment returns and 156 conveyances to Winnebago Mental Health Institute were completed. In 2021, 260 new civil commitments, 71 returns and 231 conveyances to Winnebago Mental Health Institute were completed.

