

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 health crises.

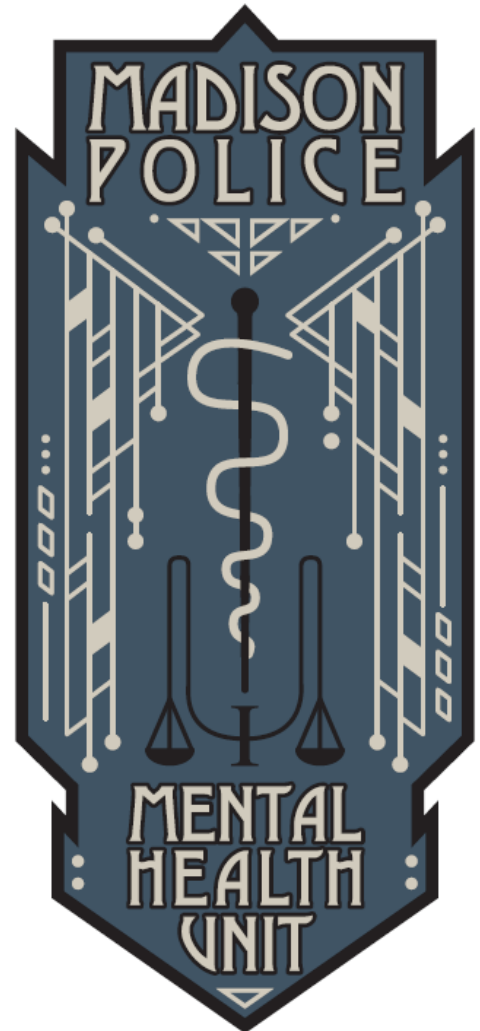
MHU's Values

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.



MHU-LED TRAININGS IN 2023

The MHU Sergeant, MHOs and LECWs collaboratively developed and implemented two, eight hour, in-person trainings for Mental Health Liaison Officers in 2023. In partnership with county-wide law enforcement, we hosted nineteen members of other agencies' mental health units at our Fall 2023 training. Topics covered during these trainings included: Introduction to 988; bipolar disorder; eviction process and safety considerations; chapter 51 from the litigating attorney's perspective; veteran's resources; introduction to moral injury; constructive feedback sessions on MPD's crisis response SOP; and crisis response scenarios.



MHU'S NATIONAL LEARNING SITE ACTIVITY IN 2023

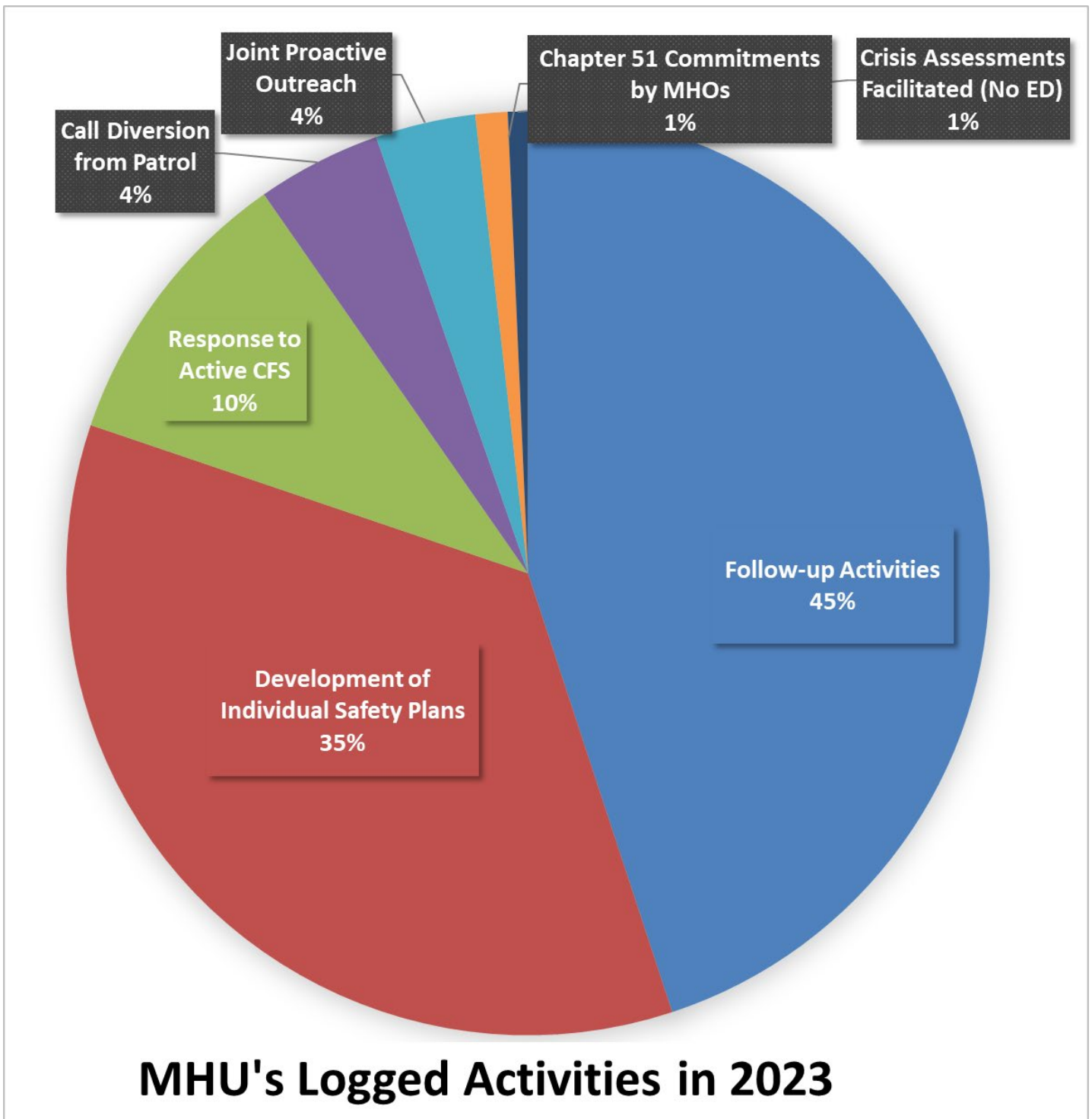
In 2023, MPD's MHU was one of only fifteen Police-Mental Health Collaboration (PMHC) learning sites selected by the Council of State Governments Justice Center. As a learning site, our unit fields inquiries and hosts visitors from law enforcement agencies around the county who seek support to begin or advance behavioral health units of their own.

This year, our MHU logged 35 instances of PMHC learning site-related activities. These activities included: fielding requests for information from different law enforcement or social service agencies, presenting to internal and external groups on various topics, and holding meetings for the community to discuss our department's response to mental health crises. This year's learning site activities saw a marked increase, in large part because of our unit's launch of the "Partnering with Law Enforcement" presentation series. We provide 60-75 minute presentations to various community-based organizations, free of charge.

In June of 2023, our distinction as a learning site provided the opportunity for three members of our unit to attend a National Law Enforcement Knowledge Lab conference in Denver, Colorado. This conference hosted representatives from all fifteen PMHC learning sites, and featured executive and clinical guest speakers from around the country. Our team was proud to represent Madison on a national stage, and we look forward to future cross-learning opportunities.

MHU'S WORKLOAD IN 2023

In 2023, MHOs and LECWs collaboratively logged 712 distinct work activities, serving 368 distinct individuals. Activities included responding to active patrol calls, diverting calls from patrol, completing Chapter 51 commitments, facilitating crisis assessments, completing follow-up activities of various duration, creating or editing safety plans for community members, and doing joint outreach activities with Crisis Workers.



FREQUENCY RELATED TO SUBJECTS RECEIVING MHU SERVICES

The following statistics relate to all 2023 logged activities that our MHOs and LECWs engaged in with individuals in our community:

- Approximately 10.1% 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 18 case activities.
- The top 50% most-frequently contacted subjects received a total of approximately 74% of all MHU activity, and the top 10% received approximately 36% of all logged activity.
- 64.7% of subjects whose cases came to the attention of the MHU garnered only one activity.

- The average subject received 1.9 contacts, though this was skewed by the fact that many subjects received just one contact.
- Excluding subjects who received just one contact, the average contacts per subject was 3.7.

MPD'S CHAPTER 51 ACTIVITY IN 2023

Wisconsin statutes authorize law enforcement officers to take a person into custody to pursue an Emergency Detention (ED) when certain circumstances apply. In order to initiate an ED, officers have to be able to articulate witnessed behavior that meets a "dangerousness" standard; they must reasonably believe that the individual is mentally ill, drug dependent, or developmentally disabled; and they must believe that pursuing an ED is the least restrictive disposition appropriate to the person's needs. Even when all of these factors apply, many individuals who experience crisis are able and willing to seek voluntary treatment, so an ED is not appropriate. **In 2023, MPD officers completed 242 Emergency Detentions.**

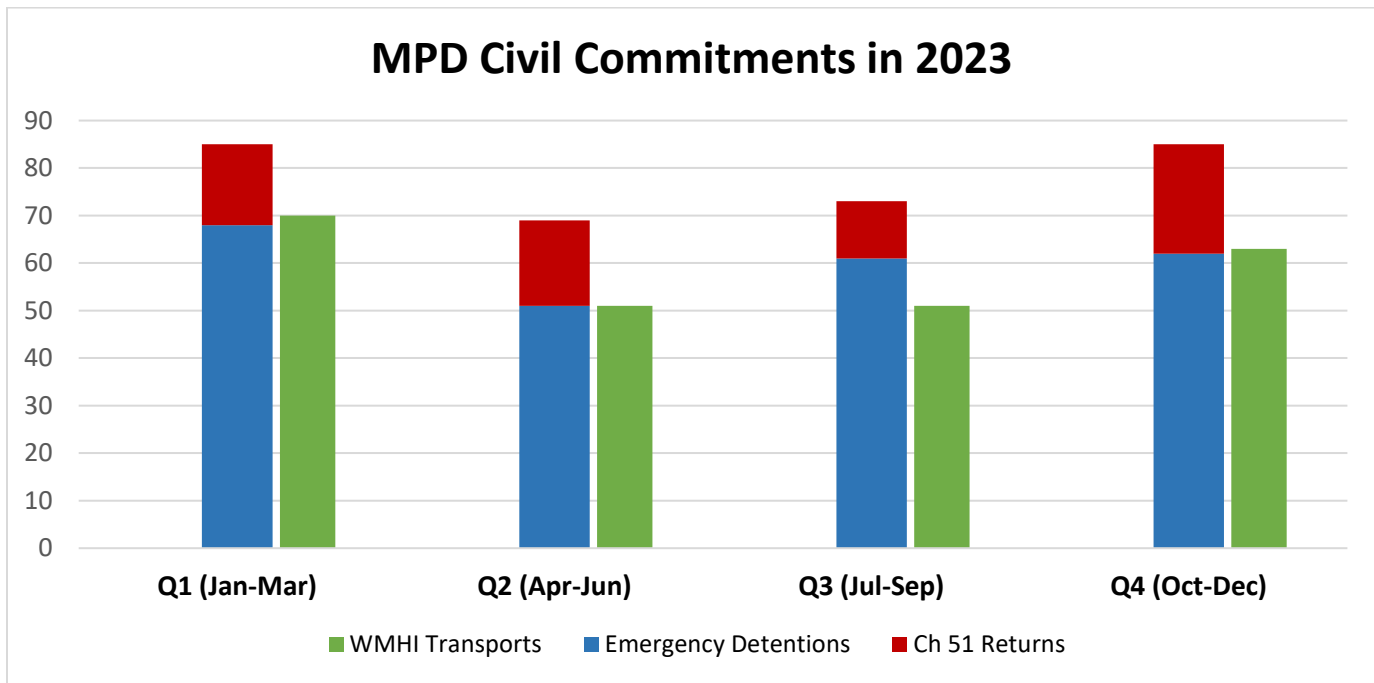
When an officer completes an ED, this initiates a court process with several possible outcomes. The individual may be discharged from involuntary hospitalization back to the community, but with certain conditions such as participating in outpatient treatment and services. If a detained individual does not comply with those conditions, Journey Mental Health can issue a "return", which authorizes law enforcement to take custody of the individual once again, and to deliver them back to a hospital. **In 2023, MPD took people into custody on 70 occasions for Chapter 51 returns.**

Finally, there are Chapter 51 commitments for which parties other than law enforcement can petition. Even though these commitments were initiated by other parties, the courts still vest the authority in law enforcement to take custody of the named individual until they are received by the appropriate medical facility. **In 2023, MPD was involved in seven "other" Chapter 51-related commitments**, two of which were alcohol commitments, and five of which were three-party petitions.

When other detention facilities (i.e. local hospitals) lack capacity or determine that a detained individual is inappropriate for their facilities, Winnebago Mental Health Institute (WMHI) is the ultimate destination. To safely transport individuals from Madison to WMHI (Oshkosh, WI), at least two MPD officers will spend approximately four hours round-trip to make the conveyance. **Of MPD's total 312 Chapter 51-related conveyances, officers transported individuals to WMHI 235 times**, approximately 74% of all Chapter 51 conveyances.

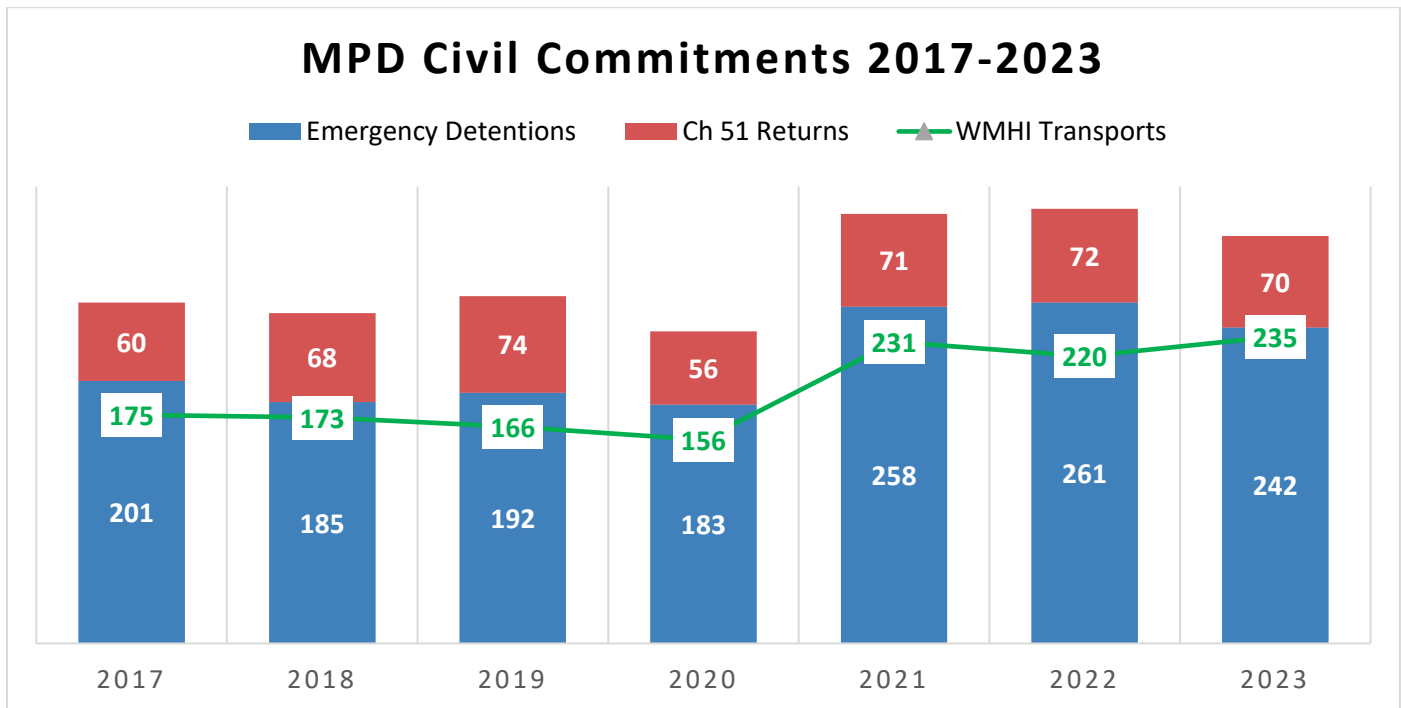
New in 2023, MPD contracted with a third-party transport service, to make a total of 54 conveyances. The majority of these transports took place during the summer months of 2023: June, July and August. **Of MPD's total 312 Chapter 51 conveyances in 2023, third-party transports constituted approximately 17% of these.** This third-party transport pilot program was a success, and we look forward to expanding the program in the future. Expansion of third-party Chapter 51 conveyances will allow more MPD personnel to spend more time responding to active calls-for-service and to other community needs.

The below graph illustrates MPD's Chapter 51 related activity, by quarter.



MPD’S CHAPTER 51 ACTIVITY YEAR-BY-YEAR

MPD’s Chapter 51 conveyances have grown considerably over the last seven years. 2023 saw a decrease in overall Chapter 51 conveyances, but an increase in conveyances to Winnebago Mental Health Institute (WMHI). The below graph illustrates those trends.



MPD CRISIS RESPONSE COMMENDATIONS

In 2023 alone, MPD personnel received 23 documented commendations for crisis response and MHU-related activities. Commendations are submitted by members of the public and by colleagues who witness officer actions that are worthy of a performance recognition citation.

Below is a small sampling of some commendations that MPD officers received last year:

- “Recognition for the officers who responded to a report of a subject who was having a mental health crisis and had barricaded himself in the home with a young child. Officers spent hours in the cold attempting to dialogue with the subject. The officers all showed patience, compassion and commitment and they are to be commended for their efforts and service.”
- “Officers responded to a report of a subject having a significant mental health crisis. Officers attempted to dialogue with the subject who made threats to kill himself. Officers attempted physical contact with the subject but he turned to a fighting posture. The officers quickly deescalated and gave the subject space. The officers on this call conducted a lengthy interaction with the subject. The officers demonstrated exceptional patience and made maximum use of their presence to give the subject time. Officers saw a chance to go hands on in a safe way and did so successfully.”
- “Officers responded to a health clinic for a subject causing a disturbance. A nurse from the clinic sent an email to thank the officers who responded. She said she was impressed with how even-handedly the officers handled everything, how they were doing everything to de-escalate the situation and just how calm they were.”
- “Officers responded to a check the welfare of a possible suicidal subject. The subject was contacted and provided with the necessary resources. The subject called MPD to give recognition to the officers who assisted them. They stated that the officers treated them like a human being rather than an officer safety issue and were just so kind and compassionate.”
- “Recognition for an officer and her efforts and exceptional work as a mental health officer in their district. The officer is attentive, responsive and on top of things. She has ambition, responds to calls in the field with officers, gets things done and makes things happen. She does a fantastic job keeping the district apprised of timely information and updates for chronic clients.”

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

In 2024, MPD's Mental Health Unit looks forward to continuing what has made us successful, and to expanding upon our current efforts. Our major goals include:

- To increase the amount of specialized trainings available to our MHOs, and continue to find opportunities to attend trainings with our LECWs.
- To increase the exposure of our unit locally and around the state, namely through increased community-based presentations. Our unit is well positioned to help educate the community and raise awareness around mental illness, police responses to crises, and the services/resources available to community members and their families.
- To increase the exposure of our unit nationally, with the support of the Council for State Governments. As a designated national learning site, we will continue to host and support agencies around the country who seek to learn about our departmental crisis response model and our unit structure.
- After completing a successful third-party transport pilot program in 2023, we look forward to expanding the program to divert lengthy Chapter 51-related transports away from law enforcement, in partnership with a third-party vendor.