



**Mayor's Report**  
**March 2023**

Hello.

In recent years, Shaker Heights Police Officers and Paramedics have been responding to an increasing number of mental health-related emergency calls.

This mirrors a national trend that was exacerbated by the pandemic.

In an effort to respond more effectively to mental health-related calls, the City last year launched a pilot Mental Health Response Program. Through this program, a full-time social worker is able to assist our first responders on calls when her assistance is needed. Equally important, our social worker can follow up with residents in person or by phone following an emergency call.

This program was developed through a collaboration between the Administration, City Council, a number of engaged residents and Recovery Resources at MetroHealth. To our knowledge, this is one of the first programs of its kind in our region.

Last Monday, City Council heard a presentation by Ms. Annette Amistadi, our social work clinician, about the Mental Health Response Program.

In her presentation, Ms. Amistadi noted that she has helped facilitate the de-escalation of what could have been crisis situations.

In addition, she has been able to divert individuals away from our health care or justice systems and into services to proactively address their needs.

She also has assessed those who frequently make 9-1-1 calls and, in many cases, been able to connect them with more appropriate resources for assistance.

And in the year ahead, Ms. Amistadi will provide Mental Health crisis intervention training for our police officers, firefighters and paramedics beyond the many hours of training our first responders already receive annually.

I'm pleased to note that Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne joined our presentation to learn more about our program. After hearing the presentation, County Executive Ronayne remarked that he sees an opportunity to replicate our program to reach more residents of Cuyahoga County.

This was gratifying to hear, since one of our goals from the outset of the program was to share our findings and serve as a model for other communities.

I am very pleased to have Ms. Amistadi and this program in place to support our first responders and to improve outcomes for individuals needing mental health services. And I am also appreciative for the support of the County Executive to explore the expansion of this program.

I am proud to live in a City that supports such a pro-active, responsive, and compassionate program.

Our Mental Health Response Program certainly sets Shaker Heights apart. Another point of distinction is that the Shaker Heights Police Department has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, or CALEA, since 1989.

The Department is currently seeking re-accreditation.

It is important to note that nationwide, only approximately 4 % of all law enforcement agencies are CALEA accredited. So this is definitely not business-as-usual for most police departments across the country.

CALEA certification involves an extra layer of voluntary scrutiny of department policies, procedures, and outcomes in order to meet an established set of professional standards.

It's a matter of great pride that our Police Department has met CALEA's high standards for so many years. Looking to the future, with our new Chief of Police Wayne Hudson at the helm, I'm confident our Police Department will continue to meet those standards.

With that, thank you and be well.