

Scope of Service Guideline

Purpose

The eCare Behavioral Health Virtual Crisis Care (VCC) program partners law enforcement and behavioral health professionals into virtual crisis response teams for individuals in crisis. The program aims to ensure those working in the criminal justice system have 24/7 access to the resources they need for individuals in crisis regardless of where they are located.

Best Practice

- Utilize eCare VCC prior to transporting an individual to a higher level of care to aid in disposition planning and develop safety plans
- Audio/visual patient consultation
- Clear and consistent communication of requested support between the activating officer and eCare VCC
- Law enforcement to evaluate if individual needs immediate medical care prior to activation of eCare VCC

Scope of Service

- eCare VCC social workers and nurses help law enforcement identify when it is not necessary for the individual to be transported to a hospital or enter the criminal justice system, and instead be connected to local community mental health services
- Provide near real time assessment of individuals per request from law enforcement
- Assist law enforcement with de-escalation and determination if an individual is able to remain in place
- Initiate a safety plan and means restriction counseling with individuals that remain in place (will recommend parents and/or guardians' participation if individual is under the age of 18)
- Provide guidance to law enforcement for the individual to be placed on an involuntary mental health hold
- Recommend further evaluation if the individual is willing to go for inpatient services voluntarily
- Offer and refer individuals to community resources for follow up care

For Law Enforcement

- Provide around-the-clock access to trained behavioral health professionals
- Decrease potential for probation violations
- Decrease petitions filed for mental health holds
- Decrease mileage costs by not traveling to Emergency Departments or mental health facilities when individuals can remain in place
- Keep officers in the local community instead of transporting when appropriate

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For Individuals

- Receive care from mental health professionals at the time of crisis, remain at home when safe to do so, and avoid hospitalization
- Avoid unnecessary health care costs, reducing the individual's financial burden
- Continue with regular daily routines (e.g. work, school, caregiving responsibilities)
- Avoid the stigma of 'criminalizing' behavioral health by providing care without requiring transport in a law enforcement vehicle

For Governments

- Save state dollars by avoiding unnecessary admissions to a state mental health facility
- Reduce the number of court appearances
- Save county dollars for unnecessary mental health holds
- Keep law enforcement officers in their communities by reducing transports for individuals to mental health facilities for assessment
- Facilitate communication and coordination with community resources to identify best practices and operational efficiencies