

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 27, 2023



Manitou Springs Police Department and UCHealth Partnering to Provide new Unit to Respond to Behavioral Health Issues

MANITOU SPRINGS, CO. (Feb. 27, 2023) – The Manitou Springs Police Department (MSPD) responded to more than 760 behavioral health-related calls in 2022, and beginning on March 1, 2023, the department will partner with UCHealth to form a co-responding unit that will respond to 911 calls with behavioral health as a primary factor.

This special unit, branded Manitou Crisis Response 1 (MCR-1), is composed of a police officer who has undergone mental health-related training and a licensed behavioral health clinician from UCHealth Memorial Hospital. The goal and purpose of the unit is to divert contacted individuals from jail and the emergency room when a behavioral health issue arises.

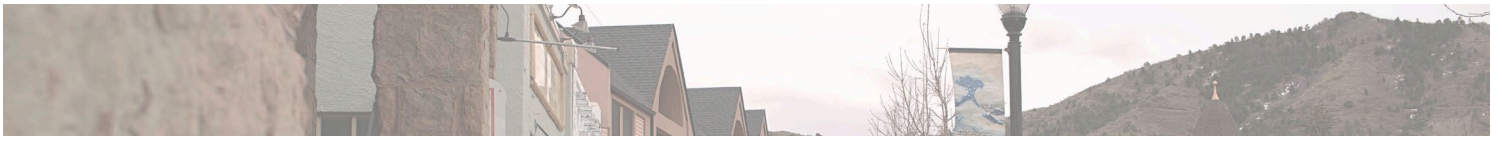
Bill Otto, Chief of Police for the MSPD, said the new unit will provide a valuable service to the community. “The fact of the matter is, oftentimes, police officers are not the best people to respond to situations in which a licensed behavioral health clinician can use their expertise and training to better handle the situation.” He continued, “This new unit is simply the best way to address any behavioral health-related calls.”

About the Unit

The MCR-1 Unit will be composed of Officer Jeff Schuelke and Holly Bradbury, a UCHealth clinician. Officer Schuelke has been with the Manitou Springs Police Department for more than three years. Bradbury is a licensed professional counselor (LPW).

“Co-Response is a great collaborative approach to behavioral health crises,” said Andrea Wood, behavioral health manager at UCHealth Memorial Hospital. “The pairing of an officer and a clinician can help de-escalate situations, and many times the team is able to refer clients to the services that will best benefit them. Our hope is to meet patients where they are and support them with their next steps to improved behavioral health or sobriety.”

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