**Lakeville Police Department’s Mental Health Team**

Early in 2015, the Lakeville Police Department saw an uptick in the numbers of Mental Health Crisis calls that we were responding to. In March of 2015, a combined team of 11 officers and police chaplains from the Lakeville Police Department began to meet to discuss ways to help alleviate the time demand on the patrol division and, at the same time, attempt to help the victims with mental health issues get the assistance they need.

Our early discussions centered on what we could do upon responding to the initial call for service, as well as how we could follow-up with the victims post crisis and make sure they were provided the resources and care that they needed to help them so that a return call could be avoided. These discussions revealed that we are trained and equipped as an agency to handle the initial call for service in an efficient manner, and that post call follow-up should be the priority of the team. We also initially decided to limit our scope to calls involving suicidal threats and attempts, not knowing how time consuming this endeavor would be. After our first year, we are now including all mental health crisis calls in our program.

The main focus of the team has become the post call follow-up. It was the belief of the team that reaching out to the victims a few days post crisis would be beneficial in a couple of ways. First, they are having another contact with our department, providing them assurance that we are there for them longer than just the initial crisis situation. We reach out to them and make sure they are no longer in crisis. If they are still struggling, we will again respond to see what assistance we can offer. If the victim indicates the time of crisis has passed, we inquire if they need any additional resources. If they do, we provide them a multitude of resources at our disposal. If they indicate that they are past the crisis and they have the resources that they need, we advise them that we are also a resource for them and should they need any additional assistance they can reach out to us.

Since the inception of the program, late March 2015, the Mental Health Team has conducted 259 follow-up interactions with citizens who recently suffered a mental health crisis. Less than 10% of those follow-ups have been for repeat crisis calls. Also, none of those contacted by our team have been the victim of a completed suicide. Though there is no statistical way to know if the team has prevented any completed suicides, we have noticed a drop in repeated calls for service where crisis intervention is required.

We believe the Mental Health Team is accomplishing the goals that were set forward at the inception. We are creating healthy relationships with our citizens in crisis and in turn are helping to alleviate the demand on our patrol division. These accomplishments are helping us to provide all citizens of Lakeville better service and all around increased quality of life.