

# MEDIA RELEASE

*For immediate release –  
November 26, 2020*



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## Funding received to support expansion of Mobile Crisis Response Team

Lanark County Mental Health is pleased to announce it has received funding from both Ontario Health - Champlain (in partnership with North Lanark Community Health Services) and County of Lanark to expand its Mobile Crisis Response Team.

“As a result of this new funding, we are able to hire additional mental health workers,” explained LCMH Executive Director Rebecca Fromowitz. “The team will now be multidisciplinary and consists of registered nurses and registered social workers who partner with Lanark County OPP and Smiths Falls Police Service.”

The MCRT program began as a pilot project funded through a Proceeds of Crime – Front-line Policing Grant in 2018. It is a partnership between LCMH, Lanark OPP and Smiths Falls Police Service to respond to mental health-related crisis situations.

Community mental health workers are co-located in police detachments and respond together with police to identify mental health needs and provide an immediate response and supports, and to facilitate access to appropriate and timely community resources, including income and food security, housing and other basic needs. A mental health worker may also do a follow-up visit or wellness check, accompanied by an officer, following a crisis situation.

“We are now able to ensure that at least six days per week there is a professional mental health practitioner able to assist police with the calls they receive from the public, where mental health concerns are evident,” Fromowitz added.

Additional goals of the program are to reduce emergency room visits due to a behavioral or mental health crisis, collaborate with local emergency departments for consultation and support of individuals in distress, reduce barriers for care, reduce the need for apprehension or justice system involvement, build and strengthen community partnerships, and facilitate community mental health awareness and education.

“Since it began, the MCRT program has been an invaluable asset to the Lanark OPP,” said Lanark County OPP Interim Detachment Commander Insp. Karuna Padiachi. “We have been able to expand the service to include weekends, with a Community Resource Officer available to work with the mental health workers seven days per week. We now have two officers assigned to this program, and we continue to seek ways to expand further.”

Smiths Falls Police Chief Mark MacGillivray added it offers better support to officers and crisis response staff. “MCRT has ensured capacity building in our understanding and

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support of mental health, as well as the community-based resources and services that are available.”

Since the program began in 2018, there has been a reported reduction in involuntary apprehensions, as well as a substantial reduction in voluntary hospital admissions.

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