City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings regarding expanding Philadelphia's mobile crisis response capacity to develop strategies and best practices for non-lethal de-escalation, crisis intervention, and restraint of individuals experiencing mental or emotional distress.

WHEREAS, On October 9, 2020, the City announced its 911 Triage and Co-Responde Program, which is currently designed to connect residents experiencing behavioral health crises to law enforcement and clinicians working together in response to calls for service; and

WHEREAS, On April 15, 2021, Mayor Kenney's budget address included a proposal of $6 million to expand the pilot program, as well as $7.2 million to expand behavioral health mobile crisis units and establish a hotline for emergency mental health services; and

WHEREAS, Advocates across the country have called for the use of mobile crisis units, which would reduce police interactions with people in crisis. It is estimated that one-quarter to one-half of all people in situations where death occurred were a direct result of not having the appropriate authorities readily available while experiencing a mental health crisis. According to Stat News mental health professionals state that mobile crisis units offer a safer, more compassionate way to help those in crisis while preventing needlessly violent and traumatic encounters in the process; and

WHEREAS, There have been multiple preventable occasions where people with disabilities lost their lives due to appropriate authorities not being involved, such as Laquan McDonald who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and complex mental health problems, Ethan Saylor who had Down Syndrome and Walter Wallace, Jr. whose death occurred after a call was made that a man was armed with a knife. Both the video released on social media and his family indicated that Walter was experiencing a mental health emergency. Also, Michelle Cusseaux who was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby authorize The Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings regarding expanding Philadelphia's mobile crisis response capacity to develop strategies and best practices for non-lethal de-escalation, crisis intervention, and restraint of individuals experiencing mental or emotional distress.

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