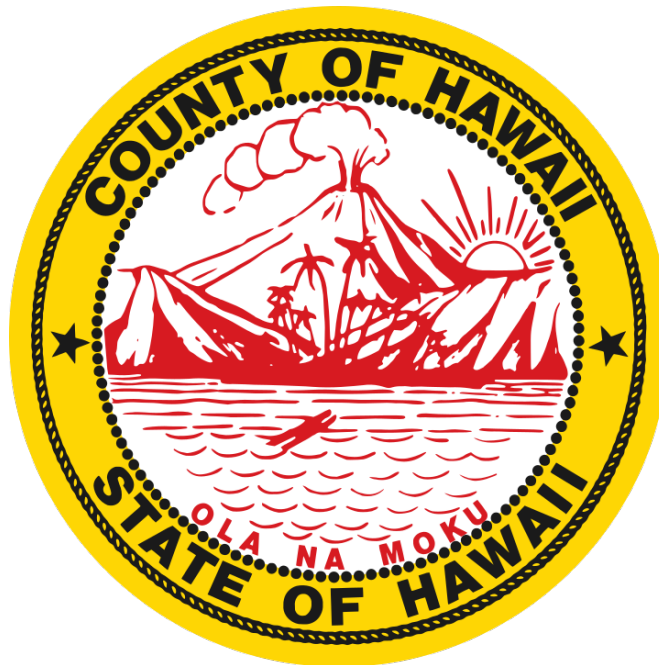




# REIMAGINE

## *Crisis Response*



Adult Mental Health Summit August 2023

Summary Report

Hawai'i County - Office of the Mayor

01/31/2024

*Aloha,*

*We're excited to share this summary report of the recommendations from the August 2023 Adult Mental Health Summit. This endeavor is a result of dedication, collaboration, and a shared commitment to enhancing mental health crisis response services in our community. The summit brought together an esteemed cohort of key stakeholders who contributed their thoughts, knowledge, and different perspectives regarding mental health crisis response.*

*Throughout this document, you will find a summary of the ideas shared, the challenges identified, and the innovative strategies proposed by you, the stakeholder. It is our sincere hope that this summary not only reflects the spirit of the Adult Mental Health Summit but also serves as a foundational resource for all stakeholders who are invested in the betterment of mental health crisis response services and the continuum of care. By providing this overview of the discussions, findings, and potential action points, we hope to extend the impact of the summit beyond the confines of a single day.*

*We express our gratitude to each stakeholder, partner organization, and supporter who contributed to the success of the Adult Mental Health Summit. As we embark on the journey outlined by these recommendations, we invite you to explore the pages that follow. Let us support the lessons learned and opportunities identified, as we continue our commitment to advancing mental health crisis response services in our community. Now let's dive into the summary of the five workgroups; Someone to Call, Someone to Respond, A Place to Go, Someone to Support Us and Someone to Fund Us.*

## Someone to Call

The group identified the following key strategies for improving the 988 Crisis Line in Hawai‘i.

- Assure that the 24/7 988 Crisis Line provides empathetic, clear, and concise communication to individuals facing mental health crisis.
  - This approach allows for a more tailored response based on the urgency of each situation. Additionally, ensure that dispatchers/crisis counselors are proficient in multiple languages and are culturally sensitive to the needs of callers from all backgrounds. This is especially important in Hawai‘i, which is a melting pot with multigenerational households that may speak English as a second language.
- Establish protocols for situations where cellular service is unavailable or interrupted.
  - This will ensure that first responders, service providers, and caller's family/friends or the caller themselves know what to do until the signal is restored. Long-term improvements should consider upgrading the 988 line to allow access even in areas without reception. Geolocation upgrades would be beneficial to first responders and service providers.
- Provide support mechanisms for dispatchers/crisis counselors to reduce the risk of burnout.
  - Support mechanisms could include on going training for staff, adequate staffing during shifts and more breaks.
- Utilizing local resource experts to maintain an updated database of available services to help dispatchers/crisis counselors convey pertinent information quickly to callers.
  - Intercept mapping could help provide a comprehensive directory of available resources.
- Collaborate with state and county offices, and relevant stakeholders to develop two awareness campaigns.
  - The first campaign would aim to instill and maintain public trust in 988.
  - The second campaign would focus on increasing awareness about available resources and services among first responders and mental health professionals.

## Someone to Respond

The group discussed the following strategies for improving crisis response and assuring there is always someone to respond when needed.

- Increase Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trained police officers.
  - CIT police officers are trained in de-escalation techniques, mental health first aid, and other skills necessary to respond to mental health crisis.
- CIT community partnerships
  - Partnerships could provide a comprehensive response system to ensure that there is always someone available to respond to mental health crisis. These partnerships would be 24/7, so there would always be more than one person available to respond.
  - Best practice research should be conducted to establish the best partnership crisis response model for Hawai'i County.
  - CIT partnerships need the support of the legislature to allocate funding for the program. They also need the support of policy advocates to raise awareness of the need for CIT partnerships and to advocate for their implementation. It reduces the number of people who are unnecessarily hospitalized or incarcerated. It improves the safety of both the people in crisis and the first responders who respond to them.
- The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team was a successful program that was previously implemented in Hawai'i.
  - The group recommends restarting the ACT team, with the support of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC). ACT teams can offer oversight of programs, funding, and regular group meetings. Oversight is important to ensure that the mental health care providers are meeting the needs of the people they serve and that they are complying with all applicable regulations.
  - Funding is essential to the success of the ACT team. The state, federal government, and/or private donors can provide funding. MED Quest could play a significant role by providing funding for the ACT team program.

- Regular group meetings can provide support and resources to people who are participating in the ACT team program. These meetings could be led by mental health professionals or peer support specialists.
  - Department of Health (DOH) would provide support to the ACT team program along with possible oversight. DOH Psychiatrists would provide medication and other medical treatment to people who are participating in the program.
- Expand awareness of existing mental health resources.
- There used to be a one-pager flyer that listed who to call, when, as well as available services like 211, 988, etc. The recommendation is to bring back that one pager. Both a physical and digital version would be ideal. The group recommends creating a user-friendly phone app, a flyer, and using social media to raise awareness. They also recommend sharing information about the 988 Crisis Line widely. To be successful, Aloha United Way and AMHD could provide funding and technical assistance for the development and implementation of strategies to expand awareness of existing mental health resources. Content creators can help promote the phone app, flyers, social media content, and other materials that will be used to raise awareness.

## **A Place to Go**

The consensus from the group on current crisis response is that there is a lack of alternatives to hospitalization or encounters with law enforcement when someone is experiencing a crisis. The group identified the following strategies for improving crisis services related to where people in crisis would go.

- Establish one or two centralized crisis centers to provide a "full-service" place to go for those experiencing a crisis.
- These drop-in centers would be staffed by a multidisciplinary team of professionals and offer a variety of services, including triage, crisis intervention, peer support, case management, and medication management. They would be

open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and free to use. The drop-in centers would be located in a safe and accessible location.

- Establishing pre-crisis peer-support drop-in center to provide a safe and supportive place for people to go when they are feeling overwhelmed or in crisis.
  - They would be staffed by peer specialists and would offer a variety of activities and services. The community, state, county, police, and a variety of organizations would need to be involved. The community could volunteer, donate, and advocate for the services. The state and county could provide funding and support, and work to reduce stigma. Professionals would provide medical treatment and help people develop a care and safety plan. The police would be trained in de-escalation and making referrals.
- Create a marketing campaign that would raise awareness of the organizations and crisis services that are currently available to people.
  - It would also work to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. Also, creating a central website to highlight all of the current crisis services available. It should be easy to navigate and provide up to date information on how to access the services.

## **Someone to Support Us**

A variety of stakeholders need to be involved in improving crisis support services, including people with lived experience of mental illness, the government, schools, universities, community groups, businesses, mental health providers, faith-based organizations, and other organizations.

These stakeholders can play a variety of roles, such as providing input on how to improve services, advocating for improved services, providing direct care to people in crisis, and raising awareness about mental health. By working together, these stakeholders can create a system of crisis support services that is accessible, effective, and stigma-free.

- Creating a walk-in service for mental health crisis and making it easier to get involuntary crisis treatment by increasing the availability of beds in crisis stabilization units and providing transportation to and from these units.

- Lowering the criteria for those needing emergency crisis services to make it easier for people to get the help they need, even if they do not meet the current criteria for involuntary treatment.
- The shortage of mental health providers in Hawai‘i stands as a significant barrier, underscoring the pressing need for more professionals in the field along with retention.
  - Ensuring fair compensation through improved incentives becomes crucial to attract and retain skilled providers, fostering a sustainable workforce.
- Offering comprehensive counseling and education opportunities prepares mental health providers with the skills necessary to accurately identify and address mental health crisis.
- A proactive approach is proposed to cater to rural populations lacking access, necessitating focused outreach efforts.
- Embracing technology like telehealth emerges as a viable means to bridge geographical gaps and extend services effectively.
- Simplifying the mental health certification and licensing process holds promise in expediting provider entry into the workforce.
- Investing in a non-traditional workforce, such as Peer Specialists and NAMI volunteers, adds value to crisis service delivery.
- Hosting mental health awareness events to reduce the stigma around mental health, thus encouraging more individuals to seek the assistance they require.
- The group recommended increasing public awareness of crisis services through public service announcements, social media campaigns, and community outreach events.

## **Someone to Fund Us**

The group discussed the following strategies to improve crisis services funding.

- Create coalitions, task forces, and training classes.
  - This would help to bring together stakeholders and develop a coordinated approach to improving crisis services. Start with using sequential intercept mapping. This is a tool that can be used to identify and address the root causes of mental health crisis response shortcomings.

- Prioritizing needs and offering grants to organizations would help to ensure that crisis services are accessible to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.
  - Seeking federal, state, and philanthropic funding would help to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to improve crisis services.
  - Another form of funding is to create a website for donations. This would make it easy for people to donate to crisis services.
- Creating a comprehensive mental health road map that offers a promising route to enhance crisis services in our community and statewide.
  - Starting with smaller-scale initiatives allows for testing innovative solutions that can later be expanded for greater impact. Prioritizing the individual's needs during mental health crisis, encompassing housing, food, and financial assistance, adds a crucial human touch.
- Implementing a universal building code has the potential to make housing construction quicker and help to alleviate the housing problems in Hawai'i.
  - Housing is a major factor when helping those in crisis.
- Addressing the established habit of people calling 911 instead of 988 requires understanding and fixing the underlying causes influencing this behavior.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the groups identified a few common points that could be used to guide the development of improved crisis services on Hawai'i Island. These points include the need for improved awareness of crisis services, the need for accessible crisis services, and the need for funding. By addressing these key areas, we can make it easier for people on Hawai'i Island to get the help they need during a mental health crisis. There is a need for improved crisis services in Hawai'i. Our current system has a lot of problems that are affecting our community's mental health and lack of a comprehensive continuum of care. With all of these problems, the opportunity to find innovative solutions to reimagine crisis response on our island is now! How can you continue to engage? Well, stay tuned as more information is coming soon and will be posted on the County of Hawai'i Mayors Office web page.

**<https://www.Hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/mayor>**