



Collaborative for Community Wellness

Asociación Colaborativa para el Bienestar Comunitario

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Chicago Aldermen Introduce Council Order for Alternative Plan to Police Intervention in Mental Health Emergencies

The council order introduced by nine aldermen is an important first step in reducing civilian interaction with armed police forces during mental health crises

Chicago -- On Wednesday, nine aldermen sent an open letter to Mayor Lori Lightfoot requesting help in developing a 24-hour mental health crisis hotline within the Department of Public Health. The request comes with a Council Order that lays out a framework for creating the hotline along with subsequent expansion of public mental health clinics--a program that aldermen and mental health professionals see as a necessary alternative to current interventions by armed police.

“Chicago has more police officers per capita than any other major U.S. city but it has not made us any safer,” says chief sponsor Ald. Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez of the 33rd Ward. “This Council Order is an opportunity for Chicago to invest in non-punitive alternatives that create a safer response for non-violent incidents and people suffering mental health emergencies.”

The letter and Council Order comes on the same day as news broke that [police shot a 13-year old autistic boy in Utah after his mom called the police for help](#). A headline that echoes similar stories told [again](#) and [again](#).

“Chicago has enormous disparities in mental health service access for communities on the south and west side,” says Dr. Arturo Carrillo, the Director of Health and Violence Prevention for Brighton Park Neighborhood Council and the head of the Collaborative for Community Wellness. “We cannot continue to rely on the police to fill these holes in our mental health system. This order is an important first step in rebuilding the decimated public mental health infrastructure that the city needs now more than ever and safely supporting people in crisis without having to involve armed officers.”

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The Collaborative for Community Wellness is convened by Brighton Park Neighborhood Council and brings together mental health professionals, community-based organizations, and community residents to address the lack of mental health access and to redefine mental health to match the needs of the community in Chicago.

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