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Community Response Team One Year Anniversary & Announcement of Federal Funding for a Second Team

(with Photo Op)

Abilene, Texas – Betty Hardwick Center, Abilene Police Department, and Abilene Fire Department will celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Community Response Team on Tuesday, June 23rd at 2:45 at Betty Hardwick Center’s Board Room, 2616 S. Clack Street, Suite 150, Abilene Texas. June marks one year of the CRT’s deployment in our Abilene Community.

During the first year, the CRT has provided 1,654 calls for service. Of that number, 33% (546) were crisis calls and only 61 of those resulted in involuntary emergency detention orders for inpatient care. The team estimates they diverted at least 22 individuals from jail and 60 persons from the emergency room. The desired goals for this multi-disciplinary team include -

- Diversion from the jail and emergency departments when the CRT is operational.
- Enhanced outreach and engagement as the system reorients toward more proactive engagement, prevention, outreach, and linkage to care.
- Strengthened partnerships between the existing behavioral health system, hospital systems, law enforcement and the criminal justice system; and
- Better aligned community resources to improve the outcomes with people with complex needs who routinely cycle between jails, emergency departments, and inpatient care.

Abilene is only the third city in the nation, and the second in Texas, to deploy a team that includes law enforcement, paramedic, and mental health professionals, modeled after the first program, the Right Care Team in Dallas. Further, this project aligns closely with the recent Executive Order from President Trump urging law enforcement to include social workers in partnership to respond to citizens suffering homelessness, mental illness, or substance use disorders.

Additionally, this collaborative partnership has been awarded a federal grant of more than \$1 million from the Bureau of Justice Assistance under the U.S. Department of Justice to create a second Community Response Team, anticipated to begin work later this summer.