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CRIME

Partners in Care on track to expand to all police precincts in Nashville

[Kirsten Fiscus](#) and [Craig Shoup](#) Nashville Tennessean

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It's been nearly two years since the Partners in Care program launched in Metro Nashville Police precincts across the city, pairing mental health workers with officers on duty.

More than 3,000 responses later, the program announced Wednesday about 4% of the crisis calls ended in arrests. Meanwhile, the success of the program has led to its expansion to the Midtown Hills Precinct.

Michael Randolph, program manager for Partners in Care, said arrest data was not tracked prior to the organization launching its pilot program in June 2021.

"Most of the arrest are felony warrants," Randolph said.

The North, Hermitage, Central and South precincts currently utilize the program.

"The goal of Partners in Care has always been to offer a more empathetic approach and provide better access to care for those suffering with a behavioral health crisis or any kind of mental illness," said Pam Womack, CEO of Mental Health Cooperative.

More: Mental Health Cooperative, Nashville Fire Department to team up on crisis response calls

Officials plan to launch the program in the remaining Nashville precincts — one every six months — to cover the entire city. The program is scheduled to launch in Madison in November. The East and West precincts will follow.

Last September, the Metro Council in a unanimous vote made the program permanent.

More than 160 officers and 37 supervisors received an additional 40 hours of crisis response training in preparation for the partnership. The program is run by one manager and 14 master's level mental health professionals.

The majority of interactions don't end in arrest. People who need extra care are instead diverted to local emergency rooms, an inpatient facility or the cooperative's Crisis Treatment Center.

“The last month has been especially hard for Nashville,” said Amanda Bracht, the senior vice president for Clinical Services at the Cooperative. “We want to make that everyone knows MHC is here to help individuals cope with these difficult times, whether that is through providing treatment services or connecting individuals to other specialized resources in our community.”