



INDIANA: Instead of Jailing Those with Mental Illness, Here's What Indianapolis Is Doing

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State: Indiana

[Indianapolis Star](#) [1]

In August, Indianapolis launched a Mobile Crisis Assistance Team (MCAT) to respond to mental health-related emergencies. Made up of police officers, paramedics, and mental health clinicians, the specialized unit aims to reduce contact with jails and emergency departments by connecting individuals in distress with mental health and substance abuse services. A four-month evaluation of the pilot program found that only seven percent of MCAT calls resulted in an arrest, and in just over half, the team brought callers to a hospital for treatment. In about two-thirds of calls, the team was able to relieve other first responders at the scene of the emergency. Evaluators found that one of the biggest barriers to implementing the MCAT program was a lack of outpatient treatment options. "Addressing these issues requires bolstering a broader system of behavioral health care beyond the purview of MCAT, follow-up units, emergency departments, and first responders," evaluators recommended. The city plans to make improvements to the program based on these findings.

Spark Extra! Read the [evaluation](#) [2].

Settings: Law Enforcement, First Responders

Strategies: Respond to Crisis

Links within this resource

[1] <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/crime/2018/03/26/mental-illness-criminal-justice-jailing-emergency-room-indianapolis-police-ems-midtown-mental-health/448826002/>

[2] <http://policyinstitute.iu.edu/Uploads/PublicationFiles/MCAT%20Pilot%20Evaluation%20Final%20Report.pdf>

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