



**For Immediate Release**

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***Michigan's Mental Health System, Law Enforcement Agencies, Call on Policymakers to Invest in Existing Mental Health and Public Safety Partnerships***

**LANSING, Mich. – November 18, 2020** – Amid continued conversations on racial justice and meaningful support for minority communities, Michigan's law enforcement and mental health organizations are calling on policymakers to invest in existing, proven state public health and safety programs. In a [joint statement](#) issued today to all of Michigan's elected officials and policy makers, the organizations highlighted best-practices and longstanding partnerships that merit more attention and more funding.

The letter is signed by the Michigan Sheriffs' Association, the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, the Michigan State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police, and the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan. It outlines the vital and productive partnerships between mental health professionals and law enforcement—partnerships that have existed for years but without truly sufficient policy engagement and funding from lawmakers and other leaders.

The mission of law enforcement officers is to preserve peace, address criminal activity and protect the constitutional rights of all citizens while ensuring safe communities. However, law enforcement has been called to address several growing mental health challenges—homelessness, engaging and assessing persons with mental health challenges, resolving domestic disputes, and assisting persons with substance use disorders—that go far beyond law enforcement capacity and training.

"Today's extensive range of community needs burdens law enforcement with an ever-growing and unfair list of expectations. These expectations far exceed their core responsibilities," said Robert Sheehan, CEO of the CMHA. "By recognizing and fully funding the partnerships of local mental health and law enforcement professionals in communities across the state, Michigan has the ability to lead the nation in addressing these fundamental issues. We have an opportunity to build on critical partnerships and programs whose promise has been repeatedly undercut by underfunding. It's time for leaders to take a closer look at what is working and invest in proven approaches to public safety and mental health services."

Existing initiatives between mental health professionals, law enforcement professionals, prosecuting attorneys and community mental health systems throughout Michigan include:

- More than 50 mobile mental health crisis teams with skilled clinicians, or persons with lived mental health experiences, working in tandem with law enforcement agencies
- Co-responder initiatives—skilled clinicians from the community mental health system participating in local road patrols for immediate and community crises response
- Advanced training for law enforcement and medical personnel on how to recognize and interact with persons facing mental health challenges (tactics covering verbal de-escalation, crisis intervention training for adults and youth, responding to mental health emergencies)—endorsed by the Michigan Mental Health Diversion Council
- Mental health and substance use disorder courts, sobriety courts, in-jail mental health and reentry programs

These initiatives use nationally recognized evidence-based practices and aim to build effective community partnerships while encouraging public safety, mental health support and crisis prevention. The intersection of law enforcement and mental health is now at the forefront of public discussion. To read the joint letter, please visit [CMHAM.org](http://CMHAM.org).