

*Save Lives and Resources.*

# REMOVE POLICE FROM CRISIS INTERVENTION

Too often, when armed officers respond to calls for help for someone experiencing a mental health crisis, what begins as **a medical situation quickly escalates to a deadly tragedy**. Lacking expertise in mental health crisis management, law enforcement officers are not equipped to be the first responders to 911 calls seeking psychiatric assistance. Crisis intervention teams connect people with appropriate medical care and **reduce the potential for violence**, all while **saving municipalities millions of dollars** by diverting these calls away from police departments.

## CONSIDER THIS CASE

Police officers in North Carolina responded to a 911 call from a man seeking help calming his teenage stepson, **Keith Vidal**, who was experiencing a schizophrenic episode. The officers shot at Keith, who died from his wounds. In the aftermath of this tragedy, Keith's stepfather lamented: "We called for help, and they killed my son."

**1 IN 4 PEOPLE SHOT  
AND KILLED BY  
POLICE HAD A KNOWN  
MENTAL ILLNESS**

In a study from 2015-2020  
NAMI 2020

## WE NEED...

**An ordinance, mayoral order, or budget item**

that provides for crisis response teams

**Crisis Intervention Teams staffed by trained medical personnel, including**

social workers and mental health professionals

**To empower a municipal agency to hire and train civilian responders**

## *The Truth About*

# CRISIS INTERVENTION

### MYTH

*Police can adequately handle crisis intervention through specialized police training.*

### FACT

Residents in crisis need the help of trained personnel—medics and crisis workers with mental health training and experience. Lacking expertise in mental health crisis management, law enforcement officers are ill-equipped and ill-suited to be the first responders to 911 calls seeking medical and psychiatric assistance.

### MYTH

*We need police involvement to ensure mental health crises don't take a violent turn.*

### FACT

Crisis intervention teams, such as the CAHOOTS responders in Eugene, Oregon, can and do call for backup from law enforcement if an encounter becomes violent, but such calls are rarely necessary. An analysis of police-involved shooting deaths in 2015 showed that in the majority of cases officers were not responding to a crime, but to calls from loved ones or bystanders concerned about a “mentally fragile person... behaving erratically.”