

B* HEARD

Transforming NYC's Response to Mental Health Emergencies

FIRST SIX MONTHS OF OPERATIONS

On June 6, 2021, New York City launched B-HEARD (Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division), a pilot program in which both mental and physical health professionals are responding to 911 mental health emergency calls. B-HEARD teams include emergency medical technicians/paramedics from the Fire Department's Emergency Medical Services and social workers from NYC Health + Hospitals. Teams operate seven days a week, 16 hours a day. During the 16 hours a day when B-HEARD teams were operational from June 6 – November 30, 2021, there were approximately 17 mental health 911 calls each day in the pilot area.

The pilot began in three police precincts in East Harlem and parts of central and north Harlem – the 25th, 28th and 32nd. In November 2021, the pilot area was expanded westward to include the 26th and 30th precincts as well.

The goals of the B-HEARD pilot are to:

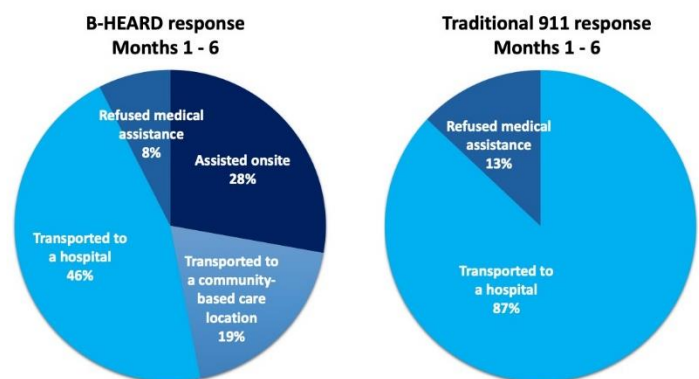
- Route 911 mental health calls to a health-centered B-HEARD response whenever it is appropriate to do so.
- Increase connection to community-based care, reduce unnecessary transports to hospitals, and reduce unnecessary use of police resources.



This brief summarizes data from the first six months of B-HEARD operations (June 6 – November 30, 2021)

B-HEARD is leading to fewer unnecessary hospitalizations, and more community-based care

- 46% of people assisted by B-HEARD were transported to a hospital for additional care – a much lower percentage than the traditional response, in which 87% of people were transported to a hospital.
- 47% of people served by B-HEARD were served in their community, with options for behavioral healthcare that were not previously part of emergency response.
 - 28% of people assisted by B-HEARD were served onsite, including de-escalation, counseling, or referral to community-based care.
 - 19% of people assisted by B-HEARD were transported to a community-based healthcare or social service location – primarily the East Harlem Support and Connection Center.



Percentages exceed 100% due to rounding

Compared to traditional 911 response, more people are accepting assistance from B-HEARD teams – and everyone is offered follow-up care

- In the B-HEARD response, 92% of people accepted assistance. In the traditional response (NYPD/EMS), 87% of people accepted assistance.
- Everyone served by B-HEARD was offered follow-up care. This can include help from a Department of Health and Mental Hygiene team, a Department of Homeless Services team, or a hospital-based program. It can also include reconnecting clients to their previous healthcare providers.

Assistance is reaching people quickly

Average B-HEARD response time in months 1 – 6

- In the first six months of operations, B-HEARD assistance reached people in need on average in less than 14 minutes, in line with traditional response.

B-HEARD response*

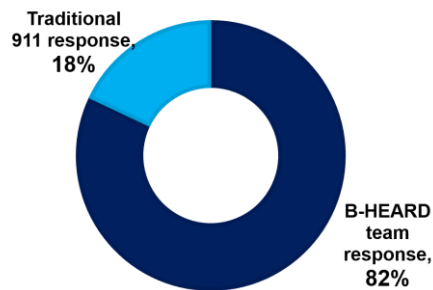
13 minutes 41 seconds

*Includes physical and behavioral medical assistance

In the first six months of the B-HEARD pilot:

- 911 operators (both NYPD and EMS) routed 22% of mental health 911 calls (684 calls) to B-HEARD teams. B-HEARD is actively working to grow this number to approximately 50% of all 911 mental health calls, including by assigning additional EMS call-takers, analyzing calls to ensure that new protocols are followed, training patrol officers and EMS field units about the services B-HEARD teams can provide, and piloting new approaches to triage. Typically, B-HEARD teams do not respond to calls involving individuals who require immediate transport to a hospital, present risk of imminent harm to themselves or others, or in situations where EMS call-takers do not have enough information to assess risk of imminent harm.
- B-HEARD teams responded to approximately 82% of all calls routed to them, 564 total calls. The remaining calls received the traditional response by NYPD and EMS, typically because the B-HEARD teams were unavailable, responding to another call. This total does not include the number of times B-HEARD teams responded to requests from agency partners, including NYPD and EMS.

B-HEARD teams are responding to 82% of calls routed to B-HEARD by 911



Interagency coordination is working well

- NYPD has requested onsite assistance from B-HEARD 72 times. Patrol officers and EMS field units see the value of B-HEARD teams, and have called for support to assist them to de-escalate situations, provide care once it is safe to do so, and help ease transport to a hospital.
- B-HEARD has requested onsite assistance from NYPD 34 times, in all but two cases to assist in transport to hospitals. Twice, B-HEARD teams called for support due to safety concerns.

To learn more about the B-HEARD program, visit mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/b-heard