

# B\* HEARD

## Transforming NYC's Response to Mental Health Emergencies

January – March 2022 (FY22 Q3)

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 January 1 – March 31, 2022, **there were approximately 2,400 mental health 911 calls in the pilot area.**

In January 2022, the B-HEARD pilot area covered five police precincts in Harlem - the 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and 32<sup>nd</sup>. On March 20, 2022, B-HEARD teams began responding to calls in four additional precincts, the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> precincts in Manhattan and the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> precincts in the Bronx, for a total of nine precincts covered by the pilot area during this reporting period.



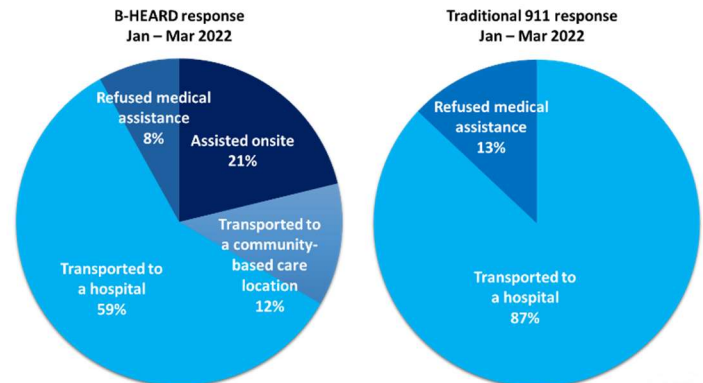
The goals of the B-HEARD pilot are to:

- **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 for B-HEARD operations from January 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022.

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

- **59% 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.**
- **33% of people served by B-HEARD were served in their community**, with options for behavioral healthcare that were not previously part of emergency response.
  - **21% of people assisted by B-HEARD were served onsite**, including de-escalation, counseling, or referral to community-based care.
  - **12% 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.



## 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

- From January through March 2022, **B-HEARD assistance reached people in need on average in 14 minutes**, in line with the EMS average response time to mental health emergency calls.

Average B-HEARD response time,\*  
Jan – Mar 2022

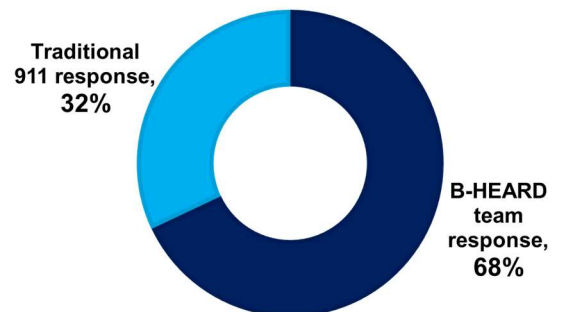
14 minutes 12 seconds

\*Includes physical and behavioral medical assistance

### From January – March 2022 of the B-HEARD pilot:

- **911 EMS operators routed 23% of mental health 911 calls (561 calls) to B-HEARD teams.** B-HEARD is actively working to increase this percentage through multiple strategies, 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 so they know when to request a B-HEARD response in the field, 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 get deployed in situations where EMS call-takers do not have enough information to assess risk of imminent harm.
- **B-HEARD teams responded to approximately 68% of all calls routed to them, 383 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 in the field, including NYPD and EMS. B-HEARD teams occasionally call on NYPD for assistance, primarily to assist EMS with escorting patients to the hospital and in rare instances to support with safety concerns.

B-HEARD teams responded to 68% of calls routed to B-HEARD by 911



To learn more about the B-HEARD program, visit [mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/b-heard](https://mentalhealth.cityofnewyork.us/b-heard)