

B* HEARD

Transforming NYC’s Response to Mental Health Emergencies

Data for January 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023
(FY23 Q3 & Q4)

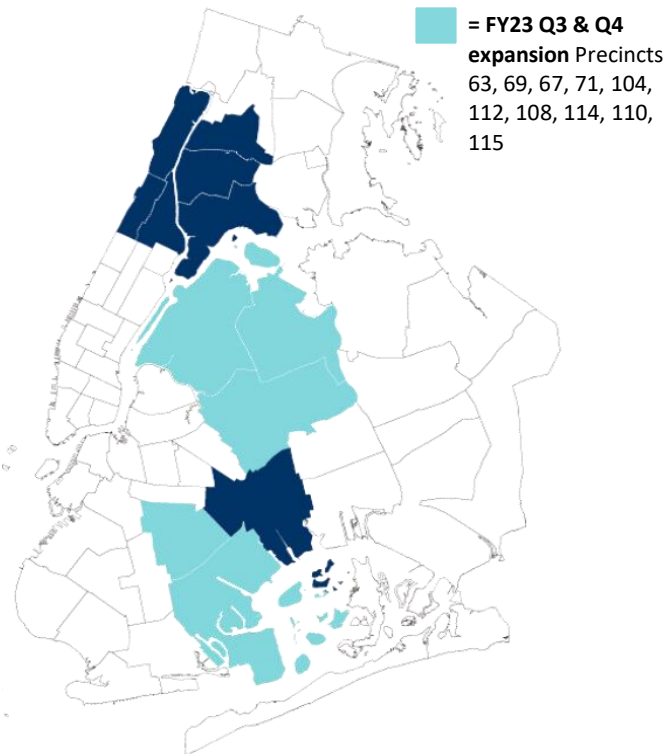
On June 6, 2021, New York City launched B-HEARD (Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division), a pilot program in which both mental and physical health professionals respond to 911 mental health emergency calls. B-HEARD teams include Emergency Medical Technicians/Paramedics from the Fire Department’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and mental health professionals from NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H). Teams operate seven days a week, 16 hours a day within the pilot area.

B-HEARD Pilot Goals

- 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 voluntary transports to hospitals
- Reduce unnecessary use of police resources

From January 1 - June 30, 2023, the B-HEARD pilot continued to connect individuals to community-based care when appropriate, leading to fewer unnecessary trips to the emergency room.

Current B-HEARD Pilot Area



B-HEARD Expansion

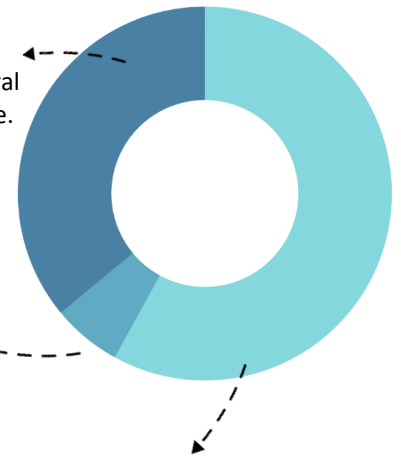
At the end of March 2023, B-HEARD expanded to parts of Queens, and additional neighborhoods in Brooklyn, making this new crisis response option available in communities across four boroughs.

B-HEARD Patient Outcomes Based on Comprehensive Mental Health Assessment

36% were served onsite, including de-escalation, counseling, and/or referral to community-based care.

6% were transported to a community-based healthcare or social service location – primarily Support and Connection Centers.

58% were transported to a hospital for additional care based on a comprehensive mental health assessment. In such cases, the presence of an on-site mental health clinician can provide increased support and more efficient care through a warm hand-off upon their arrival at the hospital.



Data source: NYC Health + Hospitals

Six Months

20,692

TOTAL MENTAL HEALTH 911 CALLS IN B-HEARD PILOT AREA

9,253 (45%)

TOTAL MENTAL HEALTH 911 CALLS IN PILOT AREA THAT WERE ELIGIBLE FOR A B-HEARD RESPONSE

5,095

TOTAL MENTAL HEALTH 911 CALLS IN PILOT AREA THAT RECEIVED A B-HEARD RESPONSE

(Responded to 55% of Eligible Calls and 25% of Total Mental Health 911 Calls)

By Quarter

Calls B-HEARD Responded to by Fiscal Quarter

JUNE 2021	FY22 Q1	FY22 Q2	FY22 Q3	FY22 Q4	FY23 Q1	FY23 Q2	FY23 Q3	FY23 Q4
65	251	311	507	864	801	1291	2,191	2,904

Data source: FDNY EMS

FY23 Quarter 3 (January- March 2023)

45% (3,888) of the 8,688 total 911 mental health calls in the pilot area were eligible for a B-HEARD response in FY23 Q3. B-HEARD responded to 56% (2,191) of those eligible calls.

FY23 Quarter 4 (April – June 2023)

45% (5,365) of the 12,004 total mental health 911 calls in the pilot area were eligible for a B-HEARD response in FY23 Q4. B-HEARD responded to 54% (2,904) of those eligible calls.

Addressing Challenges in Identifying More Eligible Calls

It is generally difficult for 911 operators to get a clear and accurate description from the caller regarding what is happening at the scene. The very nature of emergencies is fluid, dynamic, and quickly evolving, even while the operator is speaking with the caller. This is especially true of 911 mental health calls. Due to increasing 911 call volume as well as a need for more EMS call-takers, many mental health calls do not receive the additional triage needed to determine eligibility for B-HEARD. The city is working to address these challenges through a number of strategies, including hiring more EMS 911 call-takers in Fiscal Year 2024.

The increase in eligible calls and overall responses is a result of new protocols that allow B-HEARD teams to respond to a broader range of mental health calls. Typically, mental health calls where EMS call-takers do not have enough information to assess eligibility for B-HEARD, receive a response from NYPD and/or EMS. Now, in addition to being sent on their own to calls triaged as not having violence or weapon as a primary responder, B-HEARD teams can be added to calls assigned to NYPD and/or EMS for a response where eligibility for a B-HEARD response might not be established during the call triaging process. In calls where B-HEARD, NYPD and/or EMS are dispatched, once it is determined that the call is appropriate for a B-HEARD response, the team can take over engagement with the individual, while NYPD and/or EMS is then relieved and departs from the scene. With these new protocols, more calls are being identified as eligible for a B-HEARD response and the B-HEARD teams are responding to a higher percentage and number of mental health 911 calls.

The city will continue to monitor this new approach closely and gather information to inform how we implement future system-wide changes.