Eugene Police Department, Lane County Sheriff’s Office, and Springfield Police team up for first Lane County Regional Crisis Intervention Training

Law enforcement officer crisis intervention team training is expanding county-wide. September 23 – 26th, staff from Eugene Police Department, Lane County Sheriff’s Office and Springfield Police Department will host Lane County’s first Regional Crisis Intervention Team training class open to sworn law enforcement personnel.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training is a police-based, first responder crisis intervention model that works with community, health care and advocacy partnerships. The 40-hour training is designed to increase the ability to resolve police encounters with people who have mental illnesses safely and when appropriate, link them to mental health supports and services that reduce the chances for future inter actions with the criminal justice system. Officers and deputies work in conjunction with trained dispatchers, CAHOOTS and mental health providers.

The CIT Model was first developed in Memphis, TN and has spread throughout the country and is known as “The Memphis Model.” In 2013 agency heads from EPD, LCSO, SPD and Lane County Behavioral Health Services entered into an agreement (MOU) acknowledging their commitment to providing training to first responders in order to recognize and respond appropriately to individuals experiencing mental health issues and/or crisis. The agreement also outlined the agency's desire to divert these individuals into the health care system over the criminal justice system when at all possible. The two basic goals of CIT are 1) to improve officer and consumer safety, 2) redirect individuals with mental illness from the judicial system to the health care system.

September 2014’s regional training has been made available in part from grant funding awarded by the State of Oregon Addictions and Mental Health Services. In addition to participants from EPD, LCSO and SPD, seats have been offered to Lane County Parole and Probation, University of Oregon Police Department, and police departments in Florence, Junction City, and Cottage Grove.

Lane County Regional CIT community partners include both public and private entities including: National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Lane Co (NAMI), Lane County Behavioral Health Services, Lane County Public Health, Peace Health – UDH, First Baptist Church, Oregon Family Support Network, the Veterans Administration, Buckley House, The Eugene Mission, private mental health practitioners, CAHOOTS, Senior & Disabled Services, The Child Center, and
Eugene Municipal Court. The CIT training and curriculum includes an overview of psychiatric disorders, perspectives from consumers and advocates, sessions on post-traumatic stress disorder, autism/intellectual and developmental disabilities, personality disorders, age-related disorders, mental status exams/director's hold and civil commitment and Mental Health Court, Co-Occurring disorders, the crisis cycle and modes of communication, de-escalation techniques, suicide/suicide intervention, crisis intervention for adults and juveniles, a consumer panel talking about interactions with police, crisis intervention scenarios, local resources, CIT protocols and policy, and site visits.

The Eugene Police Department began training officers in 2008 and has 83 percent of sworn staff trained. EPD is engaged in numerous community efforts to identify methods to divert persons with mental health issues from the criminal justice system and into more appropriate services. Most recently staff has participated in a national workshop hosted by the SAMSHA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) GAINS (Gathering Information, Assessing what works, Interpreting the facts, Networking, Stimulating Change) center aimed at identifying gaps in mental health services. They are participants at the Mental Health Summit meetings and attend the Acute Care council meetings monthly to offer guidance. Several EPD personnel are board members for local non-profit agencies representing persons with mental illness and disabilities.

###