



NEWS RELEASE

Chicago Police Department

Eddie T. Johnson
Superintendent

Anthony Guglielmi
Director

For Immediate Release
January 16, 2017

Contact: Office of News Affairs
312-745-6110

City First Responders Partner with Hospitals to Develop Live Simulation Crisis Intervention Training

New interdisciplinary scenario-based training will enhance the identification, assessment and treatment of City's emergency mental health response

CHICAGO – The Chicago Police Department (CPD), Chicago Fire Department (CFD) and Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) today announced a partnership with EMS System Hospitals to develop a state-of-the-art crisis response training course and curriculum. The new SIMLAB course represents the next step forward in enhancing the city's mental health response and is intended to continue to improve collaboration in the recognition and treatment of a person experiencing a mental health emergency.

"This is a ground-breaking program," said CFD Commissioner Jose Santiago. "It better enables the City to coordinate its emergency response to people in need by addressing specialized training, starting with the person answering the original 9-1-1 call all the way to emergency room staff who evaluate and treat the incoming patient."

The course brings together EMS providers, 911 call takers and dispatchers, and CPD officers with mental health providers to engage in a live simulation, scenario-based crisis intervention training. The course will include real-time communication and instruction from on-line medical control EMS System hospital personnel and mental health experts. The goal of the training is to help agencies work collaboratively and ultimately create positive outcomes for persons who are in need of mental health services.

"This new inter-departmental training builds upon our commitment to better prepare police officers for a wide variety of scenarios they may face," said CPD Superintendent Eddie Johnson. "Through this new program and CPD's Crisis Intervention Training, first responders throughout the City of Chicago will be able to provide more positive outcomes for individuals suffering from a mental health crisis."

(continued)

The interdisciplinary, interagency 8-hour class will help first response partners not only identify the underlying signs and symptoms of an acute mental health crisis, but also to develop protocols for screening, evaluation and transport. The scenario-based training gives first responders hands-on practice in a variety of mental health related incidents and will serve to increase awareness and understanding among first responders.

“In most cases, 911 call takers and dispatchers are the front line of emergency response, and we want to ensure that we are delivering the highest quality service both to the residents and first responders we serve,” said OEMC Executive Director Alicia-Tate Nadeau. “This scenario-based training strengthens the coordination and response among our public safety departments and gives our 911 Operations staff the tools they need to help identify a mental health related call and ensure the proper resources are dispatched to help individuals with mental illness.”

The first class will be conducted in the first quarter of 2017. Continued efforts will be made to identify officers and first responders to enroll in future classes who are assigned to parts of the city with the greatest need for crisis response training. The SIMLAB will continue to offer future classes for interagency crisis response training involving 9-1-1-staff, law enforcement, fire EMS, physicians, ER nurses and clinical experts.

“Previously 911 operators, police, paramedics, and emergency department clinicians did not have a good understanding of each other’s role for a person suffering from a behavioral emergency,” said Dr. Eddie Markul, EMS Medical Director for Region XI (Chicago) EMS. “By bringing together all emergency responders for stimulation training, our system will offer an improved, coordinated response to behavioral emergencies as well as a better awareness of serious medical conditions that can masquerade as a psychiatric condition.”

These efforts continue to build on and enhance understanding and treatment of those with mental health needs. Last month, OEMC announced more than 425 OEMC staff received the training which has resulted in better recognition and increased dispatch of CIT trained officers. In the past year, close to 500 additional Chicago Police officers have been CIT certified, and the increase in CIT officers dispatched to mental health-related calls has increased more than seven-fold from the previous year.

###