

Mental Health Change Initiative (MHCI)

Q1 2026 Update to the
Policy and Governance
Committee

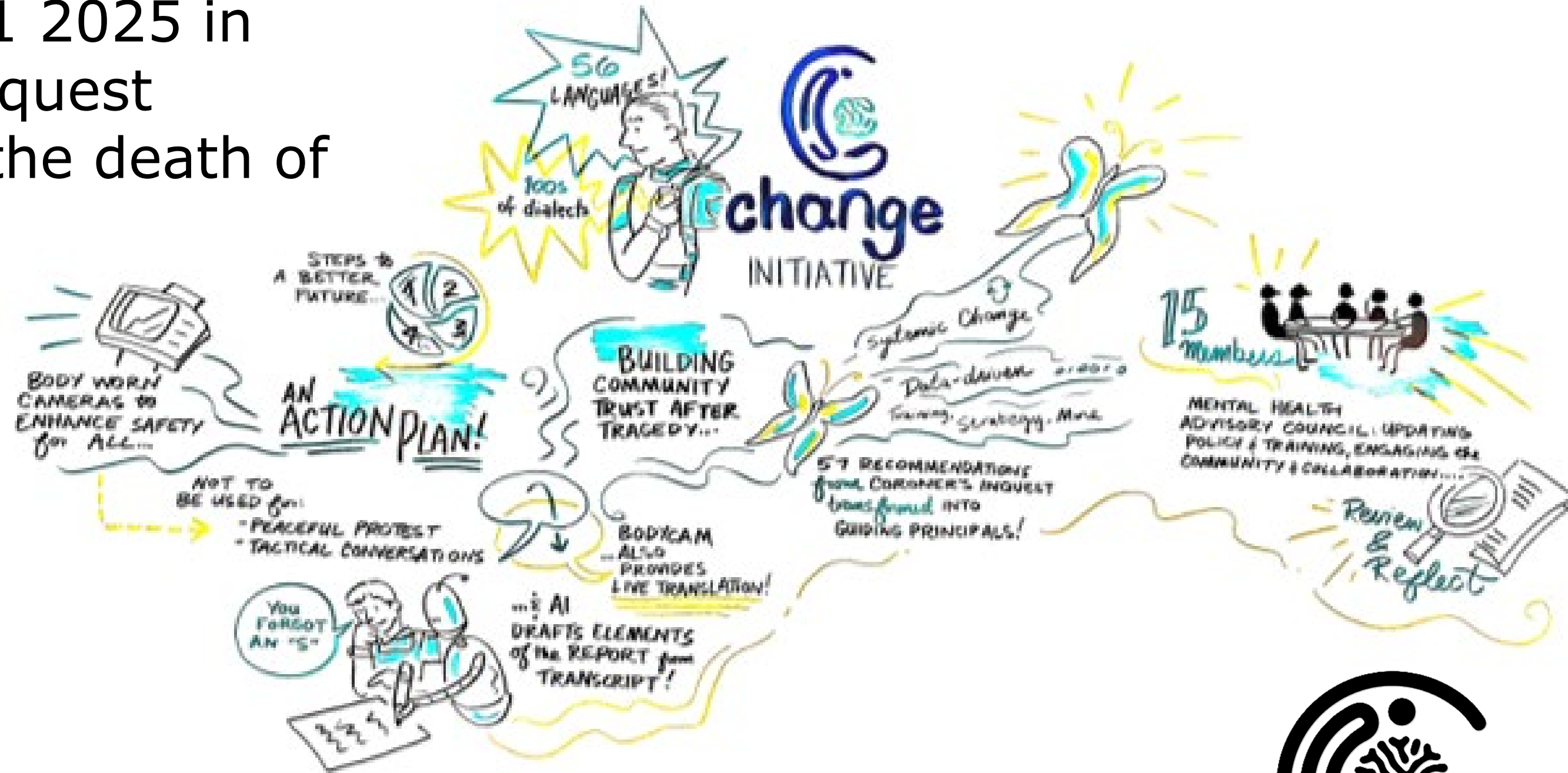
March 25, 2026



Background

- MHCI was launched in Q1 2025 in response to the Coroner's Inquest recommendations following the death of Mr. Abdirahman Abdi.

- MHCI is designed as a structured improvement framework for mental health response.



- MHCI is focused on training, policy, research, and community collaboration.



Background

Key goals:

- To improve OPS crisis response and de-escalation practices.
- To strengthen training and operational guidance.
- To increase transparency and public trust.
- To ensure alignment with Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA) expectations.
- To build stronger collaboration with health and community partners.

Core Principle:

A balanced response that protects:

- Public safety.
- Community trust.
- Officer safety and well-being.

Work Streams

*Execution of work streams will address all inquest recommendations

Governance & Community Engagement

- Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC)

Training and Professional Development

- De-escalation training evaluation
- Training framework improvements

Policy and Practice Review

- Review and modernization of OPS policies, procedures and practices

Data and Evidence

- Mental health data analysis
- Development of internal analytics tools

Operational Learning

- Body-Worn Camera program
- Research partnerships



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Progress To Date

Key achievements to date include:

- Establishment and operationalization of MHAC.
- Launch of Body-Worn Camera deployment in partnership with DEIMS.
- Development of mental health data analysis tools to assist with response.
- Initiation of policy, procedure and practice review.
- Creation of structured work plans across MHCI work streams.
- Initiation of a comprehensive training review.



Ongoing and Upcoming Work

As part of the Training and Professional Development Work Stream, OPS has partnered with Carleton University's Police Research Lab. The research, led by Dr. Craig Bennell, is examining:

- Police–civilian crisis interactions.
- De-escalation practices.
- Operational decision-making.

The research will:

- Provide independent evaluation.
- Support evidence-informed training and policy improvements.
- Establish a baseline for future evaluation.

This partnership strengthens transparency and academic rigor.

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Ongoing and Upcoming Work

Through the Data and Evidence Work Stream, MHCI is strengthening how OPS understands and evaluates mental health calls.

Current work includes:

- A multi-year analysis of mental health-related call context.
- Development of a mental health data dashboard.
- AI tool creation to assist with analysis.
- Exploration of patterns involving repeat interactions with OPS & EMS services.

These tools will help OPS:

- Improve situational awareness.
- Support evidence-based decision making.
- Enhance public transparency.
- Provide better informed options for OPS to work with crisis response.



Ongoing and Upcoming Work

Beyond those initiatives mentioned, MHCI will focus on the following in the coming quarter:



- Continuation of policy, procedure, and practice review through MHAC.
- Expansion of training evaluation and improvement.
- Advancing data analysis and reporting tools.
- Supporting independent research and evaluation.

