

**Report to / Rapport au:**

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD  
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

**31 May 2021 / 31 mai 2021**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

**Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa**

**Contact Person / Personne ressource:**

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**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-21-09: STATISTICS RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH CALLS FOR SERVICE**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À LA DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS I-21-09: STATISTIQUES SUR LES APPELS DE SERVICE LIÉES À LA SANTÉ MENTALE**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Police Services Board receives this report for information.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.**

**INQUIRY**

Would the OPS please respond to the following questions related to the 25 January Consultation Approach for Mental Health Response report:

- 1- Of the calls that were listed as Mental Health Act reports, either determined as such at the time of report or following response, how many originated in a 911 call?
- 2- Regarding calls that came in and were later deemed to involve mental health, can the OPS please breakdown how many involved violence towards a person, involved a weapon, or required specific police intervention or equipment.
- 3- Is there recorded demographic information, such as age, gender, race, etc., for calls

classified as involving mental health?

4 - What percentage of all 911 calls to the OPS specifically involve mental health?

5- The 25 January report detailed the approach taken by the Waterloo Regional Police Service. What steps are being taken by the OPS to streamline and accurately record mental health data?

## **RESPONSE**

The Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) Mental Health Response Strategy (MHRS) is built around ongoing consultations with the community. This includes the creation of a community-led Guiding Council which will help to inform the design and implementation of this strategy. The council will be made up of our partners, subject matter experts, people with lived experience, and the general public – and will help us adapt our approach accordingly. We want all voices to be heard and a strategy to be created that both reflects and serves the diverse communities that make up our city, ultimately leading to better mental health outcomes.

The OPS understands how important the issue of mental health response is to community safety and well-being. We also recognize that we have a duty of care, and that we can do a better job responding to people struggling with mental health challenges. This is, at its heart, an issue of public trust. Some of the work will be implemented immediately by the OPS – we intend, for example, to focus this year on delivering training designed and administered based on input from the community so that we have an increasing number of officers with specialized mental health training embedded in every front-facing unit. This includes a review and expansion of our de-escalation and trauma-informed training, evaluating the expansion of our Mental Health Unit and developing a better way of triaging calls through, 211, 311 and 911. But mental health and well-being is a complex, multi-faceted issue and we must work together with the community to develop strategies to address this issue.

Through this work, with community partnership and input, we seek to identify and address issues related to mental health, including those situations where mental health intersects with race, gender and health equity indicators, to ensure that the strategy is in line with the City of Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plan.

In terms of the questions posed:

- In 2020, 44% of all Mental Health reports were generated from receiving calls to 911, and dispatched as either Priority 2 or Priority 3 calls for service.
- Due to the complexity of many calls for service, incidents that are concluded as, for example, assault or other violence, are not traceable if there is an additional

layer relating to mental health. The call may be finalized as an assault incident, but there may be other mitigating issues such as mental health.

- The report that was submitted to the Ottawa Police Services Board in January 2021 identified these gaps in data, and will be part of the ongoing process to develop a framework that identifies issues, trends and other data so that the OPS can help those impacted with support services and redirect them away from the criminal justice system.
- The January report referenced a study conducted by the Waterloo Regional Police Service. The aim of this work was to understand the prevalence of mental health in total police calls for service. As part of the MHRS, greater research of proven practices will need to be conducted to develop an Ottawa-based approach to better identify, assess and triage calls to the appropriate service provider.