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Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) Meeting

Documenter name: Maria Shuckahosee

Agency: [Mental Health Response Advisory Committee \(MHRAC\)](#)

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Summary

- The Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) is actively training large numbers of personnel to have crisis intervention specialization, including dispatchers.
- Cleveland Police Lt. John Mullin, a committee member and CDP Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) coordinator, said the Crisis Intervention Team likely does not have the bandwidth for all of the proposed community engagement activities. He suggested the CDP Community Engagement unit may have to participate.
- The Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) is proactively reviewing all Cleveland Police policy and will be making recommendations to CDP on areas adjacent to crisis intervention.
- There is a focus group coming up on Oct. 7 with Cleveland youth, with the goal of improving youth-police interaction long-term.

Follow-Up Questions

- [MHRAC](#) was developed in 2015 as part of an agreement between the city and the U.S. Department of Justice. Since the committee's inception, which recommendations has the CDP committed to executing? During this session, the committee chair mentioned multiple times that the committee can only advise and that changes are up to the CDP.

Notes

The meeting was led by Angela Cecys, chair of MHRAC and strategist for Public Health and Public Safety for the City of Cleveland.

You can find the agenda for this meeting [here](#).

The meeting began at 9:05 a.m.

Attendance *[Editor's note: An asterisk denotes an MHRAC committee member, according to this [document](#)]:*

- Angela Cecys, committee chair*
- Gwen McCue, Cleveland EMS*
- Monica Orange, Cleveland EMS Communications Outreach
- Dominique Hardy, Cleveland Division of Police, co-response detective
- Madison Gryder, behavioral health outreach specialist with Cleveland Public Health
- Dr. Dave Margolius, director of Public Health, City of Cleveland*
- [Moneak Jones, Documenter](#)
- [Loh](#), Homeless Congress*
- Lt. John Mullin, Cleveland Division of Police, Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator*
- Larry Heller, outreach coordinator, Northern Ohio Recovery Association*
- Anya Nazarenko, Case Western Reserve University Begun Center data team
- Rania Issa, data collection and analysis coordinator, Cleveland Division of Police
- Megan Farrell, assistant data collection and analysis coordinator, Cleveland Division of Police
- Rick Oliver, director of crisis services, FrontLine Service*
- Hannah Macias, performance auditor, [City of Cleveland Police Accountability Team](#)
- Ruth Simera, Northeast Ohio Medical University*
- Martin Bielat, assistant director of Law, City of Cleveland Police Accountability Team
- Rudolph Dupont, [Cleveland Police Monitoring Team](#)
- Lydia Hill-Grant, Cleveland Public Health
- Leigh Anderson, executive director of Police Accountability Team
- Jalina Lockhart, Cleveland EMS community outreach sergeant
- Kristy Steele, Save Our Families
- Bree Easterling, Policy Matters Ohio*
- Josiah Quarles, Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless*

MHRAC membership

Committee chair Cecys said there are some membership vacancies on the committee:

- 1 for a county mental health organization representation.
- 3 for advocacy organizations.
- 1 for area hospitals.
- 1 for interested community members.

Several attendees made suggestions to fill the vacancies. Cecys requested that further suggestions be sent directly to her.

Committee member Larry Heller suggested that people representing [alternative response models](#) be considered. He said alternative response models could range from CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) and co-responders to police-assisted diversion and police-assisted addiction and recovery, care response, and health first response.

Report from Cleveland police lieutenant

Lt. John Mullin, with the Cleveland Division of Police, gave an update on what is happening with Cleveland's Crisis Intervention Team program ([CIT](#)). Officers also can get [SCIT](#) certified (Specialized Crisis Intervention Trained).

Mullin welcomed Dominique Hardy, a CDP co-response detective, to the meeting. Mullin also mentioned Ian Mussell, a new police commander.

Mullin gave an update on new officers being trained for SCIT. Cleveland currently has 176 SCIT officers, with 130 of those out on patrol. Sixteen dispatchers are trained.

Mullin said that 54.59% of 2025 CIT calls have had SCIT officers present. Follow-ups are handled by co-responders, who are also SCIT trained. Co-response teams include one officer and one clinician.

Mullin noted that the 2025 numbers need to be cleaned up by the data team.

He and Detective Connor Lynch attended the [CIT International Conference](#) in Anaheim, California, last month to learn best practices for CIT.

Cleveland police policy review

Cecys said there was an internal survey for committee members on whether or not MHRAC should be reviewing policy for the Cleveland Division of Police beyond the four current CIT policies. The majority of appointed committee members think CIT-adjacent policy should be reviewed (13 out of 14 people).

Out of 11 policy areas, the top areas needing review are (by vote):

Arrestee medical and mental health needs

Protocol with outside agencies

Cuyahoga County Diversion Center (due to [recent closing](#), policy language referencing the center will need to be updated or revised)

Other policy areas in the survey included de-escalation, Naloxone kits and communicating with the deaf and with people whose English is limited.

Cecys reminded the group that all they can do is advise and recommend; it's up to the Cleveland Division of Police to make policy changes.

The board agreed to convene a smaller group to review the policies, then engage the larger group before reviewing in the upcoming full meeting in November.

A few members volunteered to work on policy review, and Cecys said to contact her if anyone else wished to be part of the smaller working group.

Recommendations from Community Engagement Subcommittee (proposals sent to the group before meeting)

Cecys presented the two proposals.

1. Social Media Tool Kit [[proposal](#)]
2. Community Engagement Initiatives [[proposal](#)]

There were no comments on the social media tool kit.

Cecys said there are two months left for further changes to be made before sending it to Mullin for the final draft. Cecys reminded the group that all they can do is recommend and advise; the CDP will be responsible for adopting and executing the plan.

Mullin had feedback for the Community Engagement Initiatives plan, specifically the last bullet that suggests that CIT officers attend community events without guns. Mullin said this is not feasible because guns are considered tools and officers are required to wear them while working.

Mullin also said that the CIT group is a very small group, and committing to a certain number of activities will be difficult. The CDP Community Engagement unit will be more

likely to participate, he said.

Subcommittee reports

Training subcommittee

Mullin detailed the next CIT training program schedule, starting Sept. 22 and running 33 sessions through Dec. 30.

Youth subcommittee

Bree Easterling, Policy Matters Ohio, addressed the group.

There will be a focus group with area youth on policing and community safety at East Technical High School, 2439 E. 55th St. on Oct. 7, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. [Project LIFT](#) is the facilitator.

Cecys shared a draft from the focus group created by LaToya Logan from Project LIFT.

Full agenda: Youth Focus Group on Policing & Community Safety

Goal: To provide a safe space for youth to share their experiences and collaboratively develop realistic, measurable and youth-informed recommendations for improving police-youth interactions in Cleveland.

Example: Asking kids/youth what a successful redirection looks like. Where would youth like to go instead of being taken into the system?

Easterling said youth policy has never been looked at like that, and that they will have an update at the November meeting.

The Youth Subcommittee has a new attendee from Children's Law Center, and the group will receive a presentation on that subject in the fall.

Data and Growth Subcommittee

Cecys said that Sgt. Matt Brown from the CIT unit will take over next month as the subcommittee lead.

Open Comments

Leigh Anderson, executive director of the Police Accountability Team with the City of Cleveland, spoke about the [Semiannual Report](#) that came out this month.

Anderson noted that the city received 0 downgrades and 20 upgrades. From the report: “The city deserves recognition for achieving twenty (20) upgrades this reporting period across multiple areas of the Consent Decree, including Community Engagement, Use of Force, Accountability, Transparency, Officer Assistance and Support, and Supervision. These gains reflect meaningful efforts to strengthen community partnerships, improve use of force policies and training, and establish more effective accountability structures. Such progress demonstrates that when the city invests focus and resources, it makes measurable strides toward compliance.”

Anderson highlighted [page 23](#), which mentions MHRAC and the subcommittees. She said the work of the committee is showing and being recognized, that the group was “doing it with no or limited resources,” adding, “I want to give a heartfelt thank you. This type of report and assessment would not be possible [without your work].” Anderson noted their work is being written up and filed in court, meaning it is being memorialized.

Cecys said the chairs give the DOJ and monitoring team updates on the subcommittees. They are aware of the work they’re doing on the subcommittees.

A few members of the committee expressed concern that the public doesn’t know when to call 911 vs. 988 vs. 311. The committee should help publicize what is out there, some members said.

The meeting adjourned after about one hour.

If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at clDOCUMENTERS@gmail.com with "Correction Request" in the subject line.