



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 15, 2021

## Chicago: Shrinks Will Answer 911 Calls. Cops Shoot Too Many Crazy People

As Chicago braces for another weekend of wanton gunfire, mayhem, and murder, the city has announced that headshrinkers will answer 911 calls for “mental health emergencies.”

In other words, the [Sun-Times reported](#), if someone calls 911 because his neighbor crows “[I’m cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs](#)” in the wee, small hours every morning, a burly cop with a stun gun and a Glock 9mm might not be the right medicine.

Two pilot programs will alter the way the city responds to those calls. Other mental-health specialists will man the emergency communications center to ensure that all goes well.

Truth be told, it might not be such a bad idea, except for one thing: What can a paramedic and a skull doctor do when the call takes a violent turn?



yongyuan/iStock/Getty Images Plus  
Chicago

### A Response to Floyd’s Death

“In one pilot program starting this fall, a paramedic will be dispatched with a mental health clinician for ‘behavioral health calls,’” the newspaper reported:

In another, a paramedic will work with a “recovery specialist” on calls involving substance abuse.

Mental health clinicians will be on hand at the 911 center to monitor situations, but questions remain how well these new responders will be able to de-escalate violence that can erupt during such calls.

Officials conceived the \$3.5 million Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement program because of the death of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police.

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“Floyd had battled addiction and had previously reported suffering from depression and hearing voices,” the newspaper confessed — without noting that [he died](#) of a drug overdose and [did not suffer](#) life-threatening injuries:

Across the country, towns and cities have begun rolling out programs to better respond to mental health crises. Some use specially trained cops, others pair them with mental health



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professionals and a few localities have removed police from such calls altogether.

But Floyd's death isn't the only inspiration for the program, the [newspaper reported](#). Two more reasons are the deaths at [Laquan McDonald](#) and [Quintonio LeGrier](#) at the hands of Chicago police. Both were having "mental episodes when they were shot and killed by officers responding to 911 calls."

McDonald had a knife [when a cop shot him 16 times](#). Grier attacked cops with a baseball bat. LeGrier's death inspired then Mayor Rahm Emanuel to say a new approach to such calls was needed.

The pilots will emphasize a "public health approach" to emergencies that involve someone who needs a straightjacket and megadose of thiorazine.

[Continued the Sun-Times:](#)

Before the pilots begin, however, the city will staff two ambulances each with a police officer trained in crisis intervention, a paramedic and a mental health clinician.

A team based on the North Side and another on the South Side will respond around the clock in 13 neighborhoods with a historically high number of mental health calls....

The teams will start responding to calls in August....

Other aspects of the plan include mental health clinicians staffing the 911 center to respond to some calls by phone, eliminating the need for police to respond.

Responders will also direct the mentally-ill to 24/7/365 "drop-off centers" as an alternative to jail or the emergency room.

Cops hope the program will permit police to spend their time on real criminals, such as the ones [who shot](#) 104 people and killed 19 over the July 4 weekend.

## Mixed Results

"While expectations are high, the programs have had mixed results across the country," the *Sun-Times* reported:

In Denver, officials have touted a pilot program launched last June that replaced police officers with health care workers. Over the first six months, crews responded to nearly 750 calls, none of which warranted police assistance or resulted in an arrest.

In Rochester, N.Y., however, Daniel Prude — a Black man from Chicago — was suffocated last March after officers placed a "spit hood" over his head as he experienced a mental breakdown. The police department was among the first in the state to establish a crisis intervention team, but a crisis unit didn't respond to the call that resulted in Prude's death.

Citing the the *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, the [newspaper reported](#) that about a quarter of the 1,000 people who died at the hands of police in 2018 were mentally ill. A study in 2015 found that police are 16 times more likely to shoot someone with bats in the belfry.

True perhaps, but the first figure means that three-quarters of the people killed by police are garden-variety thugs and criminals.



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Since January 1, more than 2,000 people [have been shot](#) in Chicago. Of the 774 homicide victims thus far this year, [720 were shot](#).

Mayor Lori Lightfoot, though, [is quite concerned that](#) too many white reporters cover city hall.

**H/T:** [Breitbart](#)



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