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CARES Team Expands with Second Response Team and Second Station Location to Better Serve City's West and South Sides

The City of Madison launched the Community Alternative Response Emergency Services (CARES) program, a multi-agency program for addressing non-violent, behavioral health-related emergencies in September of 2021. Dane County's 911 dispatch center dispatches CARES units to these emergencies as an alternative to police. The goal of a CARES response is to assess, de-escalate, treat, and refer or transport patients, as needed, to behavioral health services in the community.

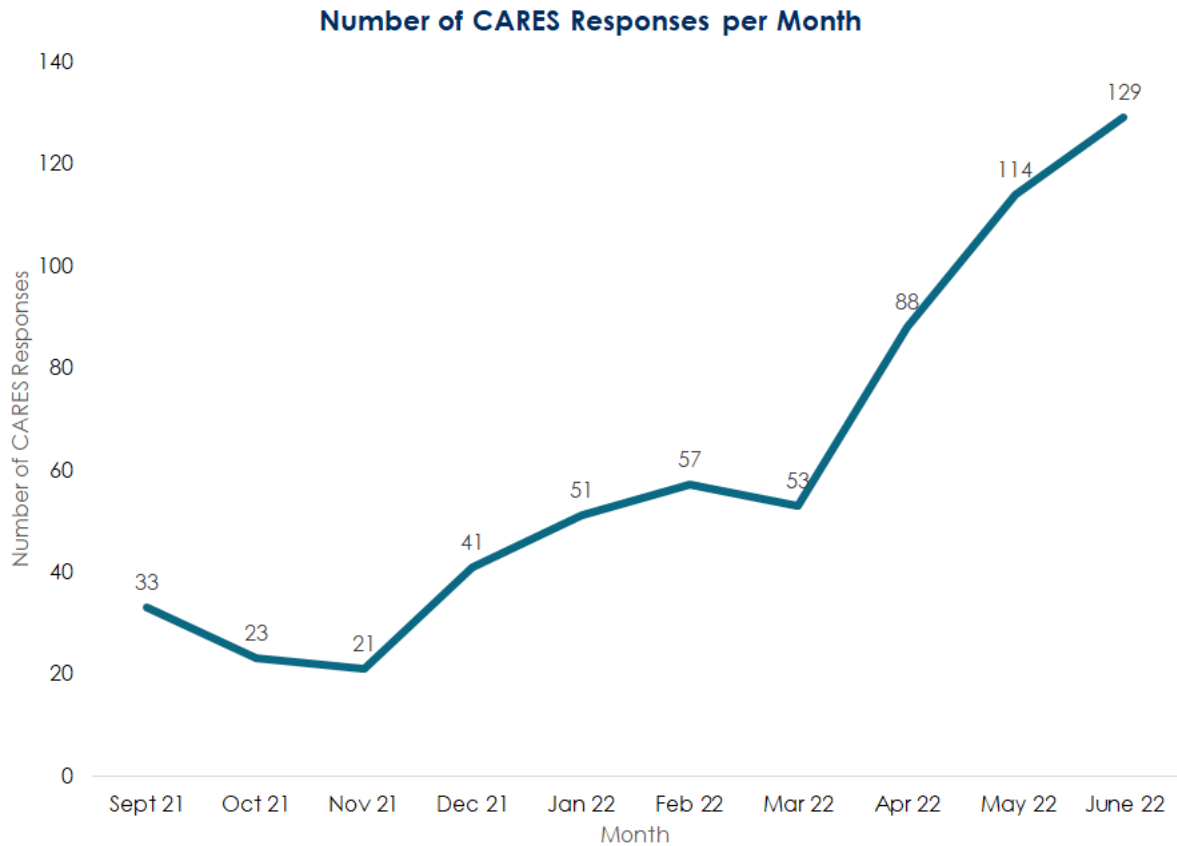
Today, the City is announcing that the CARES program is now growing from one team to two and will be responding from a second location at 2120 Fish Hatchery Road to better access and serve the City's West and South Sides.

"I am excited to announce the CARES program has expanded to include a second CARES unit. This unit will soon be operating out of a new location on Fish Hatchery near the beltline. Staffing a second CARES unit at this new location will increase our capacity to more rapidly respond to behavioral health emergencies in our community," said Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway.

"Communities around Wisconsin are finding innovative ways to respond more effectively when people are in crisis," said Attorney General Josh Kaul. "Programs like Madison's CARES program help connect people in crisis to the services they need, while freeing up additional law enforcement resources to fight crime and protect public safety. I continue to encourage the legislature to expand the investment in these programs, as proposed in my [Safer Wisconsin plan](#)."

As of today, CARES has responded to 674 total calls, with call duration averaging 60 minutes.

The City soft-launched a second CARES unit in April. CARES-2 has increased the program's response capacity, responding to 28% of all CARES calls that have occurred since it launched at the end of April. The City is announcing today that starting on July 25, both CARES units are anticipated to be in service full-time with expanded hours in the early morning and later in the evening, Monday through Friday.

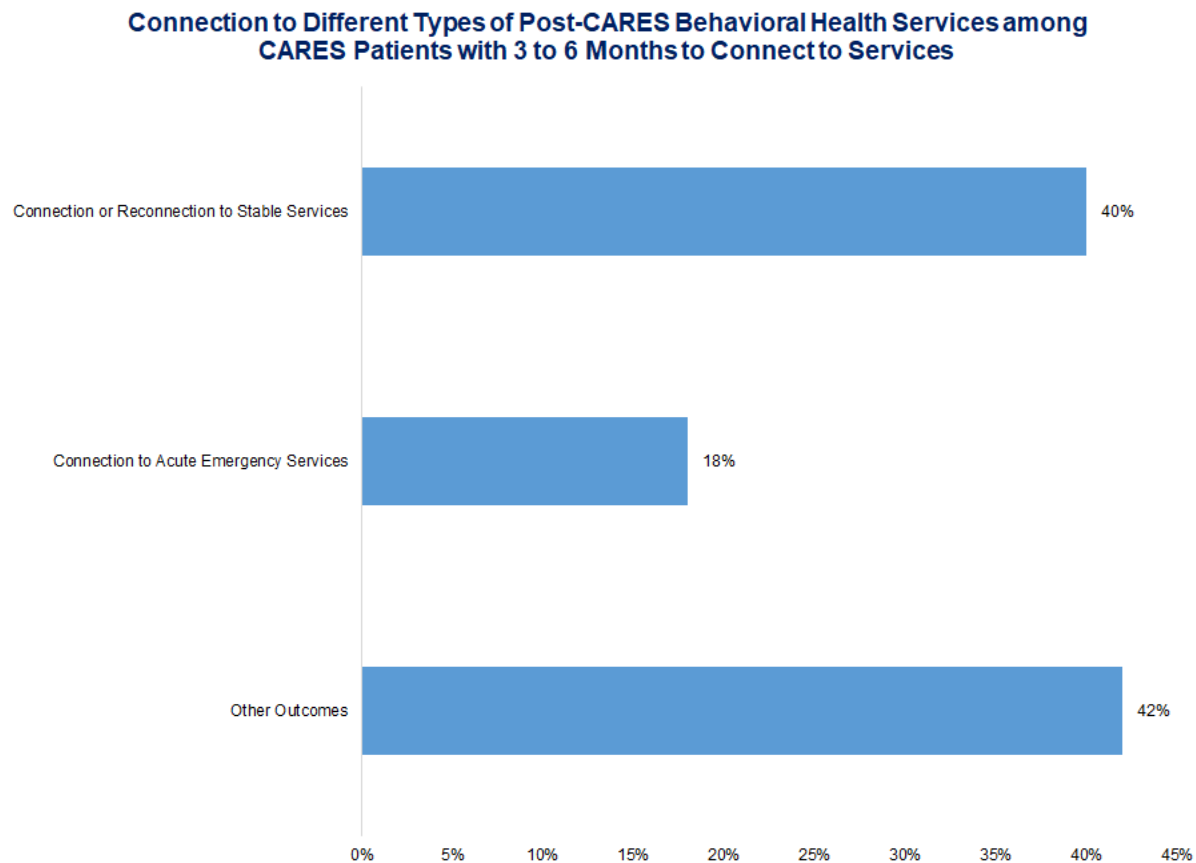


The CARES team does ongoing analyses of trends and indicators. Looking at initial data derived from the first six months of CARES operations:

- 18% of patients connected with acute emergency services. Acute emergency services include services such as: Journey Mental Health Emergency Services Unit, hospital emergency services, etc.
- 40% connected or reconnected with stable services. Stable services include case management services and other non-emergency services such as inpatient, outpatient, residential, and detox services.

For the remaining CARES calls, some patients may not have been referred to further services, because their issue was treated or resolved on-scene, some may not have needed services or declined services, or were referred to EMS or other city services. Also, some patients referred to further services by CARES may not follow-up on those referrals.

“From this early data, the CARES program appears to be a component of the success in establishing a connection between CARES patients and community behavioral health services,” said Assistant Chief Ché Stedman, of the Madison Fire Department, who supervises CARES operations.

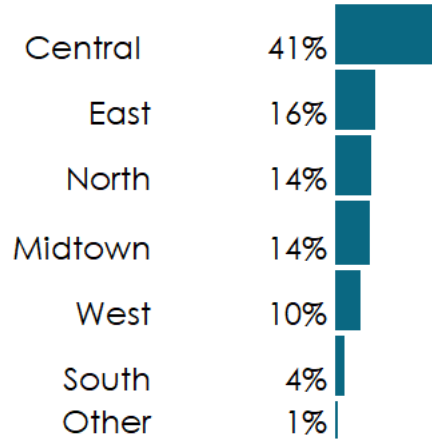


Mental health emergencies involving violence or the potential for violence continue to receive a response from the Madison Police Department. All Madison police officers receive comprehensive mental health/crisis intervention training and can connect people to services and effectuate Emergency Detentions when needed. The department also employs six Mental Health Officers with additional expertise to help divert those experiencing acute mental health crisis from the criminal justice system.

Other CARES data points follow.



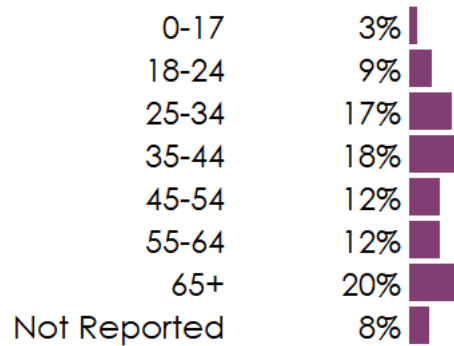
Calls per District



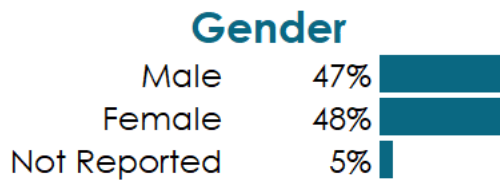
The figure above displays the distribution of CARES calls across Madison police districts. 41% of CARES calls have occurred in the central district. When the program first launched, it was initially focused on the central district only.



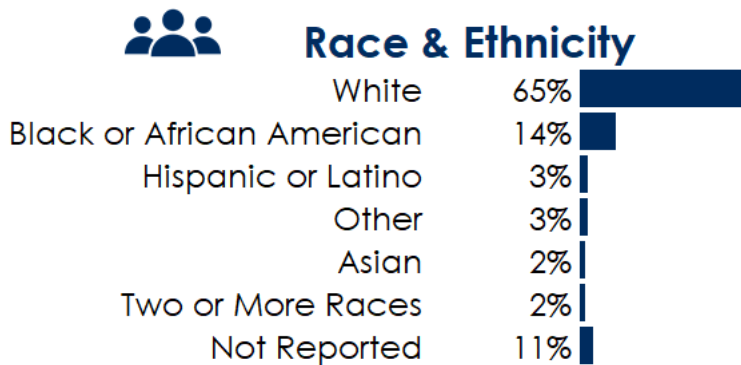
Age of Patients



The above figure indicates that the CARES program has served all age groups.



The above figure indicates that the CARES program has served nearly the same percentage of male and female patients.



The above figure provides details about the race and ethnicity of patients served by CARES.

Preliminary data on the program indicate that CARES is providing a needed service and reaching a wide variety of Madisonians.

“I am excited for the continued growth and success of this innovative program and the support CARES offers our community,” said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. “I want to thank the Madison Fire Department, the Madison Police Department, our Public Health Department, our partners at Journey Mental Health and Dane County 911 for their continued work to make the project a success.”

If you or someone you know needs the CARES team due to a behavioral health emergency, call 911 and ask for them to be dispatched.

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