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Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC) Meeting

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

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Summary

- The [Mental Health Response Advisory Committee \(MHRAC\)](#) held its first meeting of the year where members discussed the annual report, summarized each subcommittee's work in 2024, and identified the committee's goals in 2025. They aim to publish the 2024 annual report in March 2025.
- The committee discussed Cleveland's crisis intervention team (CIT) as it relates to the [City of Cleveland's consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice](#).
- Committee Member Ruth Simera presented about [Ohio's CIT program and its core elements](#).

Follow-Up Questions

- How has MHRAC been funded in the past and why does the committee need to secure more funding?
- Is any data available about the effectiveness of CIT and specialized crisis intervention team (SCIT) training in accomplishing the program's core elements?
- How does the CIT program in Cleveland differ from crisis intervention responses in other cities and counties?

Notes

The first MHRAC meeting of 2025 was started at 9:05 a.m. by Angela Cecys on Zoom. Cecys, a committee member and Cleveland's strategist for public health and safety, said that she will send an email to a listserv to see if anyone else in the Cleveland behavioral health community is interested in being appointed to the committee.

Cecys then asked chairs of [MHRAC subcommittees](#) to send summaries of their work to

be included in the 2024 annual report. She said that the final report would be ready for review by the end of February, with the goal of publishing it in March. She asked if anyone had any comments or suggestions about the types of data included in [past annual reports](#). No one had any comments or feedback.

Cecys said that City Council Member Stephanie Howse-Jones had given a presentation about [Tanisha's Law](#) in 2024 and asked if any committee members were interested in commenting on the [legislation](#). Cecys asked interested individuals to say so in the Zoom chat and said she'd email them separately.

Cecys said that she is working with the committee's IT representative to update the MHRAC website. The new website will be updated by next week for the new year, Cecys said.

MHRAC Annual End-of-Year Survey

Cecys reviewed the [responses to MHRAC's end-of-year survey](#) in which 16 appointed and non-appointed committee members were surveyed.

- There was a 6.63/10 average satisfaction rate for MHRAC's 2024 and 12 participants said they wanted to remain appointed members in 2025.
- There was a discussion over the structure and meeting times of subcommittee meetings.
- Cecys then reviewed what survey responses about what MHRAC could focus on in 2025, including:
 - Increased focus on youth, as data indicates that there is an increase of [CIT](#) calls from youth.
 - Paragraph 135 in the [City of Cleveland Consent Decree](#), which outlines the responsibilities of MHRAC in overseeing the CIT program and its effectiveness.
 - Funding for MHRAC. It was unclear how MHRAC is currently funded. The survey response document specifies grant funding.
 - How MHRAC can work most effectively alongside the City of Cleveland and the [Cleveland Community Police Commission \(CPC\)](#).
 - Peer review of the CIT program.

Subcommittee reports

Training

- Carole Ballard said that the Training Subcommittee completed all of its objectives for 2024. They facilitated CIT training for officers (both specialized and non-specialized) and dispatchers.

- In 2025, Ballard said that, based on feedback from officers after training, the subcommittee would focus on incorporating officer wellness and working with the aging population in CIT training.
- Additionally, Ballard said that dispatchers had asked for more resources and wanted to learn more about the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#).
- Ballard said that the subcommittee meeting schedule was posted on the [website](#).

Youth

- Bree Easterling said that the subcommittee wanted to focus on data, ensuring that there is more robust data around youth.
- Cecys added that the youth subcommittee chairs had recruited a number of individuals outside of MHRAC to attend their subcommittee meetings.

Community engagement

- Cecys said that the Community Engagement Subcommittee had a lack of engagement and that the meetings were not well-attended.
- Cecys said that, in 2025, the group wanted to work more with the CPC.
- She said that they also want to make a list of community events that MHRAC can attend to educate people on the difference between the [911 and 988 numbers](#) and how to request CIT officers when calling 911.
- She said they will have the subcommittee meeting schedule by the next full body meeting.

Data & Growth

- Cecys said that the subcommittee identified two frequent locations that CIT calls come from: [Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry \(LMM\)](#) and the [Norma Herr Women's Shelter](#). She said they are in contact with these two agencies.
- Cecys also said that the subcommittee is working on paragraph 135 with the [Police Accountability Team](#) and the data team.
- Cleveland Police Lieutenant John Mullin gave updates on the number of officers and teams that received CIT and [Specialized Crisis Intervention Team \(SCIT\)](#) training.
 - Mullin said that there are currently 147 officers with SCIT training; 114 are on patrol.
 - They have three new SCIT classes scheduled in April, August and December. MHRAC partners with the [Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Service \(ADAHMS\) Board of Cuyahoga County](#) on some training.
 - He said that CIT is in its assessment phase by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the monitoring team.

Discussion of CIT core elements

Ruth Simera, executive director of Northeast Ohio Medical University's [Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence](#), gave a presentation on Ohio CIT core elements. She said that CIT began in Ohio in 2000 in Akron and was modeled off a program in Memphis. She said that 31 core elements were identified in 2022, which included improving the safety of all, increasing the public's understanding of CIT, and improving the responsiveness of crisis teams. She also said that one core element of the program was to divert people in crisis away from the criminal justice system.

Simera said that training core elements were the most adhered to across Ohio; however, when training was conducted by outside parties, sometimes officers did not respond well because they felt that the trainers did not understand law enforcement culture.

Cecys said that the meeting was already over time; there would not be time for comments or group discussion following Simera's presentation. However, she said that they would discuss the presentation in breakout rooms at the next full-body meeting and that she would take time to assign core elements to subcommittees for further discussion about incorporating the elements into MHRAC's work.

The meeting was adjourned just after 10 a.m.

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