June 27, 2023

Dear Mayor Adams and Deputy Mayor Eva Wong:

The undersigned organizations respectfully urge you to revise your proposal to allocate $27 million to expand the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-HEARD) pilot program. New York City’s focus must be on a true non-police, healthcare model for responding to mental health crises, and sadly, at this juncture, B-HEARD is not such a program.

B-HEARD’s own reports underscore its flaws:

- Nearly 85% of calls in B-HEARD precincts – during its limited hours of operation -- continue to be directed to the New York Police Department (NYPD) two years after the pilot commenced;
- B-HEARD’s response time is nearly two times slower than response times for other emergencies;
- 50% of individuals continue to be transported to hospitals;
- All statistics show a downward trend over the course of the pilot; and
- City officials at various of the City Council’s recent hearings were unable to share how your proposed additional funding of $27 million would be used and what the plans are for improving B-HEARD, notwithstanding Public Health Commissioner Vasan’s admission that “[t]he first pilot has revealed a number of areas for strengthening.”

The following aspects of the B-HEARD program must be revised so that the following flaws of the pilot are remedied and so that the City appropriately serves our residents and visitors with mental health diagnoses – and their families and loved ones. B-HEARD must:

- substitute the 988 mental health crisis hotline for the police-run 911;
- add trained peers with lived mental health experience as first responders;
- ensure 24/7 operating hours; and
- ensure response times comparable to the City’s response times for other emergencies of 8--11 minutes.

Notably, cities across the country – including Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Denver – have adopted crisis response systems which limit police involvement to those instances where there is an imminent risk of serious physical harm.

It is neither fiscally prudent, nor ethically permissible, to allocate more money to B-HEARD without revising it according to the principles articulated above.
Thank you for supporting our critical request.

Signed,

**List of Organizations:**
1. ACMH, Inc.
2. Advocates for Children
3. Advocates for Justice
4. Break Free Foundation
5. Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled
6. Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York (CIDNY)
7. Community Access
8. Concern Housing
9. Equality for Flatbush (E4F)
10. Family Benches
11. Freedom Agenda
12. GMHC
13. Goddard Riverside
14. Harlem Independent Living Center
15. Harlem United Community AIDS Center, Inc.
16. Henry Street Settlement
17. Hour Children, Inc.
18. Housing Works
19. Howie the Harp
20. Independence Care System
21. Justice for Eudes Pierre
22. Lantern Community Services
23. Legal Action Center
24. Long Island United to Transform Policing and Community Safety
25. National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City, Inc. (NAMI-NYC)
26. New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS)
27. New York Community Action Project
28. New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI)
29. People USA
30. Police Reform Organizing Project (PROP)
31. Project FIND
32. Samaritan Daytop Village, Inc
33. SURJ NYC
34. The Supportive Housing Network of New York (SHNNY)
35. Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project
36. Urban Pathways
37. Women & Justice Project

**List of Individual Supporters:**
1. Jake Aubrt
2. Jilliana Alicea
3. Anne-Marie Ama
4. Katherine Bajuk
5. Joelle Ballam-Schwan
6. Sheina Banatte
7. Laura D. Barbieri, Esq.
8. Nova Benway
9. John Betts
10. Kimberly Blair
11. Rebecca Bonanno
12. Enid Braun
13. Anastasia Brindley
14. Christen Brown
15. Marianne Butler
16. Gerard A. Capelli
17. Ashley Conrad
18. Jeffrey Courter
19. Amanda Cribb
20. Laquannna Davis
21. Jeff Deutchman
22. Tara Donahue
23. Carole Eady
24. E. F. Castro Cruz
25. Lily Fawcett
26. Krista Febles
27. Aldumen Gomez
28. Wilfredo Gonzalez
29. Jessica Gooden
30. Lorie Goshin
31. Tony Guarino
32. Marina Hansen
33. Katherine Hauer
34. Tiffany Herbert
35. Denver Jade
36. Mel Johnston
37. Marguerite Jolivert
38. Yana Kachalova
39. Gregory Kahn
40. Falguni Kayasth
41. Meghan Kennedy
42. Laura Kitterle
43. Kelly Lewis
44. Diane Lilly
45. Diane Louard-Michel
46. Ruth Lowenkron
47. Zachary Margulis-Ohnuma, Esq. of ZMO Law PLLC
   (Attorney for the Estate of Miguel Richards)
48. Rosita Marinez
49. Antonio Meyers
50. Karin McFadden
   (Attorney for the Estate of Miguel Richards)
52. Charles McMellon
53. Nicole McVinue
54. Asa Mendelsohn
55. Matthew Minogue
56. Nancy Morisseau
57. Stanley Obijuru
58. David Oestricher
59. Enid Owens
60. Matthew Oyer
61. HeaSung Park
62. Donette Perkins
63. Cyrille Phipps
64. Rholan Pierre
65. Seth Pollack
66. Susan Press
67. Ethelyn Pugh
68. Carla Rabinowitz
69. Elizabeth Rhodes
70. Oredolapo Roberts
71. Lynese Robinson
72. Margaret Seely
73. Miles Stenhouse
74. Pamela Stephens
75. Jenn Sugijanto
76. Beth Tambor
77. Jeanette Toledo
78. Akyla Tomlinson
79. Hughes William
80. Joseph Wilson
81. Sharon Wilson
82. Gabriela Woellner