



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2025 #297
IN CITY COUNCIL
December 15, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see the attached memo from Police Commissioner, Christine Elow in response to Awaiting Report #25-54 asking that the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) review current crisis prevention protocols and define the role and deployment of mental health professionals.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





City of Cambridge Police Department

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Christine Elow
Police Commissioner

Yi-An Huang
City Manager

To: City Manager, Yi-An Huang
From: Police Commissioner, Christine Elow
Date: December 15, 2025
Ref.: Awaiting Report #25-54

In response to Awaiting Report #25-54 asking that the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) review current crisis prevention protocols and define the role and deployment of mental health professionals when encountering a barricaded person, we report the following:

Background: On September 10th, 2025, a Public Safety Committee meeting was conducted to review the events of a barricaded person at 243 Broadway St. During the meeting questions arose as to when and how clinicians may be deployed in the event of a barricaded person or a significant crisis situation. Specifically, it was noted that this incident unfolded over the course of several hours. Consequently, there was an opportunity for CPD's Crisis Negotiation team to utilize a clinician either for consultation or, if deemed safe to do so, try to communicate with the person in crisis to attempt to de-escalate them.

Proposed:

- **Protocol:** The Cambridge Police Crisis Negotiation team supervisors on-scene at a barricaded subject call will assess the following:
 1. If the scene is safe to include a clinician in the response.
 2. If there is sufficient time available to access a clinician.
 3. If there is a presenting mental health issue with which a clinician may be able to assist, either through consultation with the team or through contact with the person in crisis.

- **Deployment:** If the above conditions are met the incident commander will coordinate with the commander of the Crisis Negotiation team supervisor to attempt to call a clinician on-scene from among the following cohort of licensed clinicians:
 1. The Cambridge Police Department's Clinical Support Unit
 2. The Community Safety Department's Clinical Leadership
 3. The mobile crisis clinicians from North Suffolk (CHA Community Behavioral Health Center)

- **Role of Clinician:** The clinicians' role in assisting Cambridge Police in these situations consist of the following:
 1. Consult with the team to help them understand potential presenting issues (e.g., delusional thinking, behavioral escalation, mood lability, etc.)
 2. The clinician can attempt to contact providers who may be directly working with the person in an attempt to engage them in helping the de-escalation efforts.
 3. If deemed safe and appropriate by CPD supervisors, a clinician can contact the person in crisis (e.g., by phone or talking through a door or window if safe) to attempt to de-escalate the person by utilizing psychological first aid/therapeutic techniques.

Conclusion: Taken together, these crisis prevention efforts create a collaborative model that integrates clinical partners into CPD's crisis-response strategy and protocol. When conditions and circumstances allow, clinicians can assist responding officers with critical insight and direct engagement with the person in crisis. This framework ensures that police and clinical teams work together to promote safer, more informed, and more compassionate resolutions to complex incidents when the situation allows.