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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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November 3, 2025

Mitchell Katz, MD,
President and CEO
NYC Health and Hospitals
50 Water St.
New York, NY 10004

Eric Wei, MD,
CEO
NYC Health and Hospitals/Bellevue
50 Water St.
New York, NY 10004

Michelle Morse, MD,
Acting Commissioner of Health,
Chief Medical Officer
NYC Dept of Health and Mental Hygiene
125 Worth St.
New York, NY 10013

Dear Doctors Katz, Morse and Wei:

At its Full Board meeting on October 23, 2025, Community Board #2, Manhattan (CB2, Man.) adopted the following resolution:

Resolution in support of expansion of the B-HEARD program

WHEREAS

1) The Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division (B-HEARD) is a “[City initiative](#)” that sends social workers and EMTs to respond to mental health emergencies, instead of police officers.” The program was announced as a pilot in 2020 to deliver a “health-centered” response to 911 mental health calls and is funded and operated by NYC Health + Hospitals and FDNY; and

2) B-HEARD aims to achieve the following goals:

- A. Route 911 mental health calls to health-centered response when appropriate
- B. Increase connection to community-based care
- C. Reduce unnecessary transports to hospital
- D. Reduce unnecessary use of police resources; and

3) B-HEARD units respond in designated vehicles and are composed of teams of health professionals that include two Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) / paramedics from the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) and a mental health professional from NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H); and

4) B-HEARD differs from the traditional response to a mental health emergency, which consists of New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers and an ambulance with two EMTs. A 2015 report by the Treatment Advocacy Center found that people with untreated mental illness are 16 times more likely to be killed by law enforcement; and

5) B-HEARD responders must be state-licensed social workers who have completed 900 hours of internship experience as well as four additional weeks of training in partnership with EMS responders. B-HEARD teams “[use their](#) physical and mental health expertise, as well as their experience in crisis response, to deescalate emergency situations and provide immediate care”; and

6) B-HEARD units provide behavioral and physical health assessment, on-site assistance, and referral to community-based care. All individuals served by B-HEARD are offered follow up care; and

7) B-HEARD units are currently assigned to only 31 precincts and their surrounding areas, prioritized by the volume of 911 calls received for “Emotionally Disturbed Persons” (EPDs).

These precincts include the following:

- A. Manhattan (25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34)
- B. The Bronx (All)
- C. Brooklyn (61, 63, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75)
- D. Queens (104, 108, 112, 114, 115); and

8) NYPD and FDNY EMS follow an established protocol to determine whether B-HEARD is an appropriate response to an incoming 911 call. Calls are eligible for B-HEARD intervention “[when there is](#) no known weapon involved or no known imminent risk of harm to self or others.” B-HEARD does not respond to calls pertaining to drug overdose, as this requires an urgent medical response; and

9) B-HEARD faces challenges in staffing both EMTs and social workers, in part because of a shortage of individuals who meet the program’s qualification requirements; and

10) B-HEARD responded to 53% of all eligible calls between 2022 and 2024; and

11) Responses to an H+H survey of [1,126 individuals](#) served by B-HEARD between August of 2023 and March of 2025 indicate an overwhelmingly positive client experience.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT COMMUNITY BOARD 2, MANHATTAN

- 1) Advocates for the expansion of the B-HEARD program to assign a unit to operate in the catchment area of Lower Manhattan that includes District 2 Manhattan; and
- 2) Recommends that resources to be allocated to a longitudinal evaluation of the B-HEARD program to assess the program's effectiveness and the long-term health outcomes of individuals served by the program; and
- 3) To address staffing shortages of this program and others, recommends that H+H continue to expand a pipeline for development of behavioral health professionals, and that the New York State Department of Health change its licensing policy to permit a broader spectrum of professionals to provide mental health services and have those services reimbursed by Medicaid.

Vote: Unanimous, 33 Board Members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Valerie De La Rosa, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Susanna Aaron, Chair
Human Services Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

cc: Hon. Dan Goldman, Congressman
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NYS Senator
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, NYS Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Grace Lee NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council Member
Hon. Christopher Marte, NYC Council Member