

Marcus Alert

Newsletter on Marcus Alert and the Crisis Transformation for Region 4 of Virginia

VCU Honors Richmond CRT

One of Richmond's Community Response Teams (CRT) was honored with the Exceptional Service STAR Award by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Congratulations on your well-deserved recognition Officer Chavis and Clinician Coyote!



Law Enforcement Training Opportunity

Crater Criminal Justice Training Academy is offering a free, three-day training on de-escalation and mental health crisis response. The training is designed for sworn officers, supervisors, and academy recruits. Check out [this flyer](#) and email ekasky@ccjta.org for more information.

Federal Grant Opportunities

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) just released several funding opportunities which aim to strengthen the behavioral health crisis continuum. Check out [SAMHSA's Grant Dashboard](#) to learn more!

911 Q&A

How does Marcus Alert impact 911 operations?

The crux of the Marcus Alert legislation is the 911 triage framework. When planning for Marcus Alert implementation, each 911 center works with their community services board, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders to develop a framework for triaging mental health 911 calls. This framework allows for categorization and dispatch of mental health calls based on their level of risk and urgency. Though each 911 center's triage framework will look different, all 911 centers are required to transfer "low-level" mental health calls to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

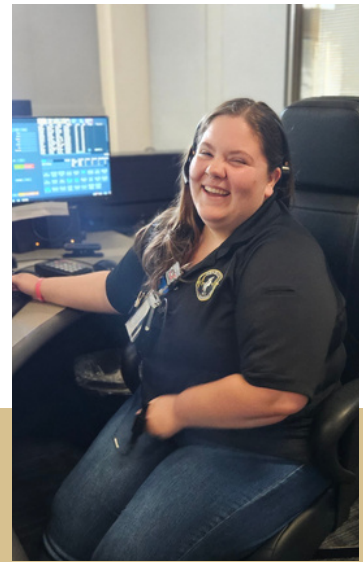
Why is 988-911 interoperability important?

988-911 interoperability means that there are protocols and procedures for transferring calls between 988 and 911 centers. 988-911 interoperability allows 911 callers who do not need a law enforcement, fire, or EMS response to be diverted directly to a crisis counselor at 988. This conserves first response resources, prevents unnecessary hospitalization and arrest, and connects callers with behavioral health care. 988-911 interoperability also allows 988 to transfer to 911 for the <2% of calls that present an imminent, life-threatening emergency.

As a state, we are working toward full 988-911 interoperability via Marcus Alert implementation by 2028. To learn more about the contractual, policy, procedural, and liability considerations with 911-988 interoperability, check out [SAMHSA's guidebook here](#).

Henrico 911 Feature

In this newsletter, we are featuring two Emergency Communications Officers from Henrico's Department of Emergency Communications, also known as Henrico 911! Keep reading to learn about Kaitlyn and Gabby.



What is your role with Henrico 911?

Gabby: I am a First Class Communications Officer. I have been working for Henrico 911 for 2.5 years.

Kaitlyn: I am a First Class Communications Training Officer and a Department of Criminal Justice Services General Instructor, which allows me to teach in our academy. I have worked for Henrico 911 for 4 years.

What made you interested in working at Henrico 911?

Gabby: I previously worked as a funeral director. I wanted to continue to work with the public and help, just in a different capacity.

Kaitlyn: I previously worked under the fire department as an EMT. I wanted to stay in public safety and help, so I decided to apply for a dispatch position. It's one of the best choices I have made!

What is the most challenging part of job, as it relates to taking mental health crisis calls?

Gabby: Not being able to be there face-to-face. As a dispatcher, you're a voice on the phone, and it can be difficult to connect over the phone.

Kaitlyn: Knowing that the system we have surrounding mental health isn't perfect. As mental health issues continue to grow, it increases the calls we get on a daily basis.

What is the most rewarding part of your job, as it relates to taking mental health crisis calls?

Gabby: Being able to provide resources and make sure that citizens are getting the help that they need.

Kaitlyn: I am a huge mental health advocate. To be able to be the calm voice that people talk to first until responders arrive. To let them know that it's okay to break down, but it's also extremely important to get help (we all need help at some point in our lives). That someone does care and wants them here.

What is something you wish the general public knew or understood about being a 911 dispatcher?

Gabby: We are trying to be patient with you. We're not trying to come off as rude - There is certain information we need to get you help.

Kaitlyn: The job is mentally taxing but at the same time extremely rewarding. Also, we know that we ask a lot of questions - It's so when the responders get on scene, they have a better picture of what is happening.



Have questions?

Feel free to contact Hannah Neukrug, Marcus Alert Coordinator for Region 4, at: hannah.neukrug@rbha.org