

Marcus Alert

Quarterly newsletter on Marcus Alert for Region 4 of Virginia

What is Marcus Alert?

Marcus Alert is a legislative framework designed to improve responses to mental and behavioral health crises in Virginia. The protocols are part of a broader crisis system transformation involving expansion of services such as 988, Co-Response, and Mobile Crisis Response. To learn more about Marcus Alert across the state, [check out this DBHDS website](#).

In 2021, Richmond became the first Region 4 (Central VA) locality to implement Marcus Alert protocols, followed by Chesterfield in 2023. Henrico is currently planning its implementation, with all localities required to launch by 2028.

Sign Up for Marcus Alert Training!

If you are a CSB employee, you can sign up now for the inaugural Region 4 Marcus Alert Training on March 12th! Simply log into [Relias](#), go to Course Library, and search for the training using the code **031224**.

988 Q&A

What is 988?

988 is the three-digit number that anyone can call if they or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis. 988 is available 24/7 by phone, text, or chat, anywhere in the U.S.



Who answers 988 in Region 4?

In Region 4, 988 is answered by trained professionals at [HopeLink](#) (formerly PRS). Between October and December 2023, HopeLink received **3,413** calls from Region 4. Of those calls, about 49% came from Richmond, 20% from Chesterfield, and 18% from Henrico.*

What happens when someone contacts 988?

Crisis workers provide immediate emotional support and connection to resources. The average speed of answer for calls in Region 4 between October and December 2023 was **under 10 seconds**. Once answered, **five out of six calls** were maintained at the call center and did not require an additional response.*



How can I learn more?

Check out 988va.org to learn more.



*Locality-specific data and call outcome data was not available for December 2023.

Additionally, though representative of national 988 trends, outcome data only includes calls transferred from 911 centers and made to the community line.

Co-Response Feature: Richmond

Each newsletter, we will be featuring a different co-response team in Region 4, starting with the first Marcus Alert implementing area: Richmond! Read on to learn about Clinician Paige and Officer Chavis from Richmond's Co-Response Team.



What made you interested in this job?

Paige: I enjoy working with my clients directly in person and helping them in handling their mental health. Being able to respond to emergencies when they happen and as they happen is amazing, as I can provide my clients with that they need in that moment.

Chavis: I was drawn to this work because I have a passion for helping people in crisis and making a positive impact in the community. I wanted to use my skills and training to provide a more compassionate and effective response to individuals experiencing mental health crises.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

Paige: Leaving work at work. If the individual I worked with was really struggling, I can find myself at home that night thinking about them and how they are doing. People's stories can have a lasting impact.

Chavis: Navigating the complex and emotionally charged situations that arise during mental health crises. It can be difficult to de-escalate tense situations and ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved. Additionally, witnessing the suffering of individuals in crisis can take an emotional toll.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

Paige: When I am able to help and provide an individual with what they needed, no matter what it was. When the individual is able to tell me they feel better, or we link them with the needed service, and they are in a safe place, it feels good to have been successful.

Chavis: Knowing that I can make a positive difference in people's lives during their most vulnerable moments. Being able to provide support, connect individuals with appropriate resources, and help them through their crises is incredibly fulfilling.

What is something you wish the public knew about co-response?

Paige: We come into every situation with genuine care and willingness to help, and that everyone in these situations needs grace and patience.

Chavis: In addition to providing support to individuals in crisis, our role also involves ensuring the safety of the public. We aim to de-escalate situations and minimize potential risk for all involved. We are dedicated to promoting safety and well-being, and we strive to approach each situation with empathy, understanding, and commitment to positive outcomes for all parties involved.



Have questions?

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