



## Memorandum

**TO: SATPAL SIDHU, COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

**FROM:** Anne Deacon, Human Services Manager

**DATE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2020**

**RE: HEALTH COMMITTEE PRESENTATION ON GRACE PROGRAM**

---

The Health Department has been asked to provide at the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Health Committee an orientation/update to the County Council on the GRACE program. Additionally, it has been asked to initiate a formal conversation on how the county can expand and improve on responses to individuals who are experiencing behavioral health crises.

The Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) program has been operational for over a year in our community. It has become an integral component of the county's system of behavioral health crisis response and supportive interventions. It serves as a hub for connections and collaboration with many community partners. These partners include treatment providers, housing providers, EMS and law enforcement.

The presentation to the County Council will update the members on the program and the challenges and successes experienced to date. The subsequent discussion will focus on how GRACE and other outreach models in our community can inform current conversations about potential expansion or development of programs designed to reduce unnecessary law enforcement responses. Our 911 system often defaults to law enforcement responses, even when law enforcement services may not be the most effective intervention. Efforts are underway to improve our various response systems, and it is critical to employ a thoughtful approach to understand the problems, research best practices, and inventory the resources available to ensure capacity and quality in any program design.

