

# Specialized Care Unit Pilot Program

August 2023  
Community Dialogue

**City of Berkeley**  
Department of Health,  
Housing & Community  
Services



# Agenda

**01** SCU Program Updates

**02** Anticipated Launch Timeline

**03** What to Expect

**04** Q & A

## SCU PROGRAM UPDATES: BONITA HOUSE

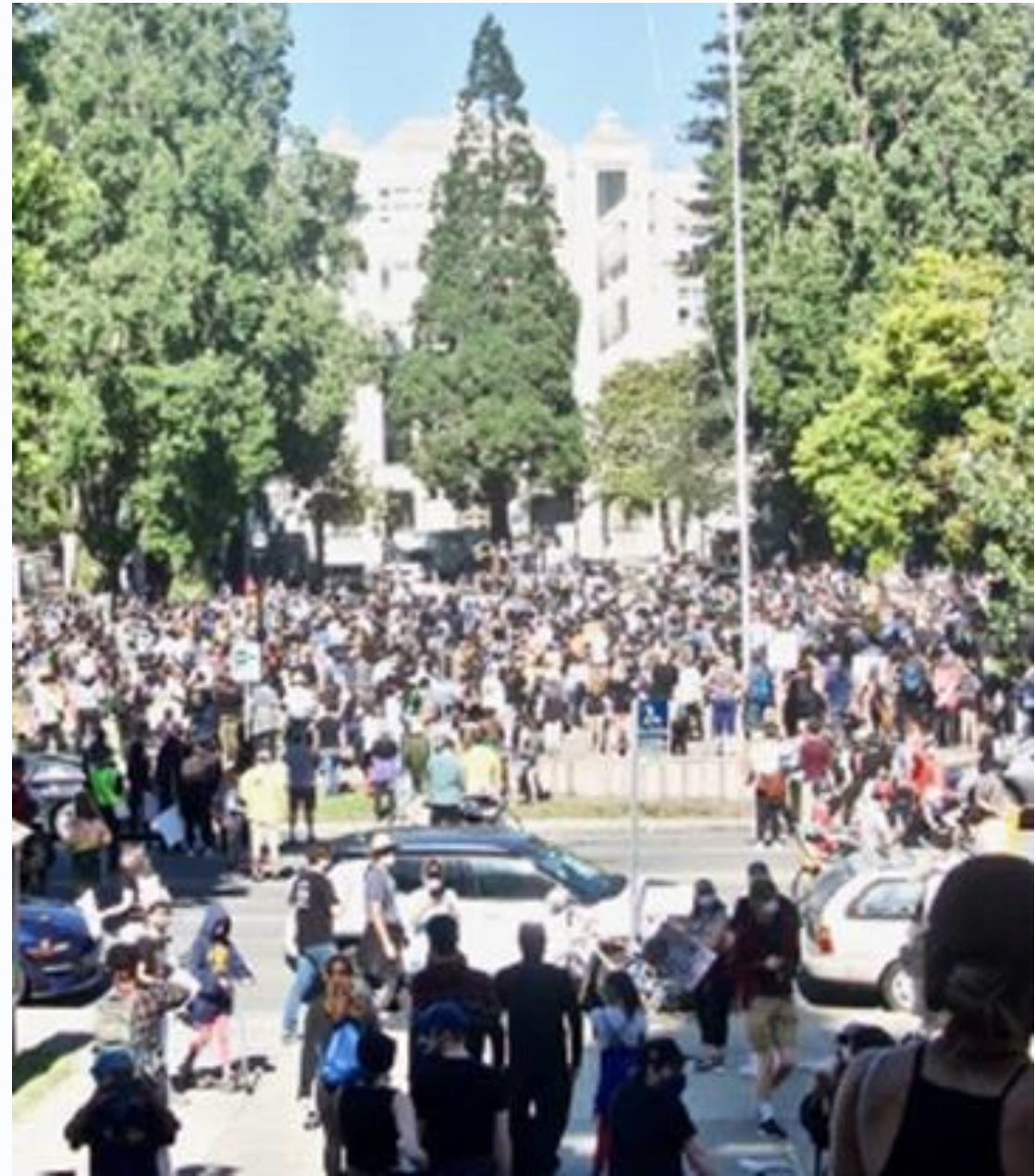
# Building the Team

### Logistics & Equipment

Vehicles have been purchased and are getting customized. The SCU will rent vehicles until the purchased ones are ready.

### Hiring Staff & Training

5 staff have been hired and the next Crisis Academy starts on August 21. Staff who attended the initial 80 hour Crisis Academy in June have been shadowing other crisis teams, and will be trained in Berkeley-specific SCU protocols along with all new hires.

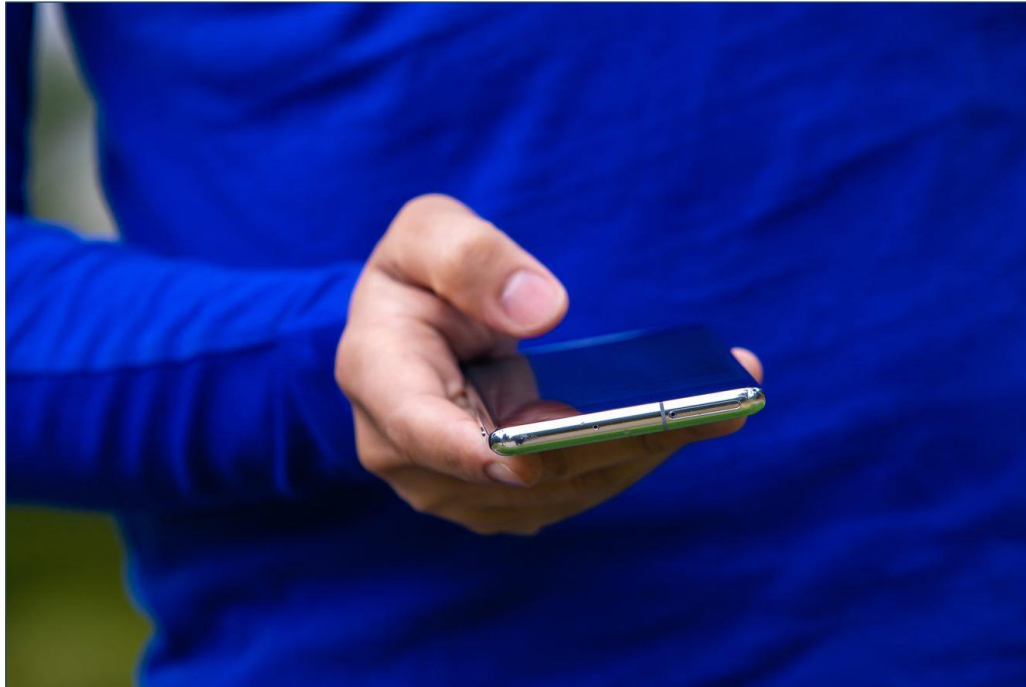


## SCU PROGRAM UPDATE: LAUNCH DATE

# Anticipated Launch: Tuesday, Sept 5

- **Call (510) 948-0075.** Community members in crisis, or witnessing a crisis, can call this **new** 10-digit number to reach the SCU.
- **Operating Hours.** To be determined closer to launch date.
- **Ramp up period.** The SCU will begin with a limited staffing footprint, prioritizing both community outreach/engagement and limited crisis response, and build to the 24/7 capacity.

## SCU PROGRAM UPDATE: WHAT TO EXPECT



## When do I call?

The SCU can be called when you, or someone, is experiencing symptoms of a crisis. These are some common symptoms, but not an extensive list:

- Unable to calm down (Anxiety)
- Feelings of helplessness
- Substance use-related concerns
- Social withdrawal
- Wellness checks
- Thoughts of self-harm

***Sometimes***, signs and symptoms of a crisis can mimic a medical emergency. The SCU call-taker will assess.

## SCU PROGRAM UPDATE: WHAT TO EXPECT

# Calling the SCU

- **Anyone** can call the SCU for any Berkeley resident!
- Call (510) 948-0075 when you, or someone else, is in crisis
- A trained SCU staff member will answer
- Brief assessment of the crisis before the SCU dispatches
  
- **Remember!** Certain calls may still be more appropriate for a 911 first response.



# SCU Team Arrives

- **Ensure there is not a medical emergency.** The SCU's first goal is to make sure the individual is not having a medical emergency (i.e. cardiac arrest, etc.)
- **Learn from and work with the individual.** The SCU will begin the assessment with the individual to learn about their crisis, if it's happened before, and determine what they can do to help.
- **Recommend Next Steps.** Could include potential transport to another location, referrals to a service provider, or creating a safety plan.
- **Refusing Service.** Individuals can refuse service from the SCU at any time. If a client declines to engage, and is not a danger to themselves or others, the SCU will stop the interaction.

## SCU PROGRAM UPDATES

# A First for Berkeley!

- This will be Berkeley's *first* independent crisis team that does not include police
- A custom crisis response model, created from extensive community feedback and analysis of 37+ models
- Supportive and care-based team with expertise from Peer Specialists, Clinicians, and EMTs
- Provide community members care and applicable linkages to a variety of services

**Note:** There may be the very rare situation in which the SCU isn't able to de-escalate a dangerous situation, or where a severe weapon such as a firearm is present, or where medical concerns are severe. In these very rare instances, 911 may be called to provide assistance.





## SCU PROGRAM UPDATE

# What's Next?



- **Program Launch & Outreach.** Multiple types of outreach materials will be distributed across the community as the SCU launches
- **Data Gathering.** Gather data on who the SCU is serving, when, and the outcomes to determine program success
- **Sign Up for the [Listserv](#)!** Stay updated as the SCU program launches in Berkeley!

# Q&A



Thank you!

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