



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
& RECOVERY SERVICES**

# PERT Newsletter

## Psychiatric Emergency Response Team

### Message from the Sheriff

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This year's theme, **"Take Action for Mental Health"** encourages everyone to take actionable steps toward supporting mental wellness. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office takes the mental wellbeing of our community seriously and I would like to take this opportunity to remind the public about the work we have been doing with our partners at Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS).

In 2015, the Sheriff's Office, BHRS, and the County Board of Supervisors formed the first ever mental health crisis co-response team in San Mateo County – The Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT). PERT is a fusion of clinical care and law enforcement. PERT's goal is to provide resources and support to individuals and families living with mental illness to manage acute crisis, reduce tragic outcomes, reduce incarcerations, and reduce psychiatric emergency hospitalizations by proactively diverting people to other applicable services and resources in the community.

Moving into 2022 and beyond, the Sheriff's Office will continue to build on our progressive approach to mental health crisis response and remain on the forefront of law enforcement and mental health collaboration.

Please visit [www.smcmmentalhealthmonth.org](http://www.smcmmentalhealthmonth.org) for additional information about San Mateo County's Mental Health Awareness Month.

- Sheriff Carlos G. Bolanos

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### PERT Staff

#### Sheriff's Office

- Captain Kristina Bell
- Sergeant Jesse Myers
- Detective Erik Rueppel
- Detective Cole Armando

#### Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

- Shirley Chu, LCSW  
*Clinical Services Manager*
- Ally Hoppis, LMFT  
*Supervising Mental Health Clinician*
- Jessica Zamora, LMFT, LPCC  
*Program Specialist*

# What is PERT?

BHRS and the Sheriff's Office were the first in the county to establish a co-response model back in 2015. One detective and one clinician were assigned to follow up on all Sheriff's Office cases where mental illness was suspected to be a factor. In 2019, the county dedicated additional resources to PERT due to the large number of cases that were being referred to the team. The team was doubled to two detectives and two clinicians to provide more support to individuals and families within the Sheriff's Office jurisdiction who were struggling with mental health and/or substance use.

With the increase in size, PERT was able to create a new process for deputies to proactively refer individuals struggling with their mental health. PERT was also able to begin carrying a caseload and currently works to close gaps throughout the mental health and criminal justice systems. PERT develops strategic action plans to assist clients with connecting with treatment, interfacing with county programs, community organizations, law enforcement, jail and juvenile hall, courts, and re-entry programs such as probation, mental health court, and parole.

PERT is part of the Sheriff's Office Crisis Negotiation Unit (CNU) in a consultative role. CNU is an on-call unit comprised of staff from the Sheriff's Office, Belmont Police Department, and East Palo Alto Police Department. The team responds to crises throughout the county and consists of trained negotiators who work to resolve some of the most difficult, dangerous, and volatile crisis calls.

With the additional staffing, PERT also began to provide and develop trainings to our allied agencies and partners. The Sheriff's Office has been facilitating the quarterly Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) since 2005, which provides training to county law enforcement agencies, dispatchers, and AMR medics. In 2019, PERT began developing the Enhanced Crisis Intervention Training program (ECIT), which rolled out in January 2021 and is held quarterly. ECIT builds on the foundation of the CIT program and focuses on de-escalation strategies and techniques at all stages of our 911 crisis call response.

PERT is a regional leader when it comes to crisis response and is sought after to provide training to new teams. While developing their teams, representatives from Belmont Police Department, Santa Clara Police Department, San Jose Police Department, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, and Palo Alto Police Department met with PERT for advice, guidance, and best practices when starting law enforcement crisis response teams.

In November 2021, PERT and BHRS Supervising Mental Health Clinician, Ally Hoppis, developed and facilitated a 32-hour training for the new Community Wellness Crisis Response Team (CWCRT) for StarVista. CWCRT is a pilot program in four cities (Daly City, South San Francisco, San Mateo, and Redwood City) where a clinician responds with officers to calls that have a mental health component. During the 4-day training, the clinicians learned about working with law enforcement, disengagement, crisis intervention, and community resources.

PERT looks forward to continuing our collaboration with allied agencies, community organizations, and families as we work toward the common goal of supporting our community members struggling with mental illness.

## Presentations/Events

PERT met with the **Coastside BHRS team** in January 2022 to introduce PERT and answer questions about crisis response and resources for clients. The Coastside BHRS team provides mental health services to both youth and adults from the entire coast.

In March 2022, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors in collaboration with the Giffords Law Center hosted "**Getting Guns off the Street: Firearm relinquishment in San Mateo County.**" This event was held at the Regional Operations Center (ROC) at 501 Winslow Street in Redwood City. The forum drew state Attorney General Rob Bonta and focused on keeping guns out of the hands of individuals subject to domestic violence and other restraining orders, or are convicted or pending trial for serious crimes. A PERT Detective supported this event as a panelist in two of the breakout sessions: Restraining Order 101, and San Mateo County Domestic Violence Restraining Order Process Past & Present.

CIT continues to be facilitated by the Sheriff's Office and NAMI, and the **45<sup>th</sup> CIT training** course was held in March 2022.

PERT participated in the **San Mateo County 2022 One Day Homeless Count**. The purpose of the One Day Homeless Count and Survey is to gather information to help the community understand homelessness in San Mateo County. This is one data set, among others, that provides information for effective planning of services to assist people experiencing homelessness and people at risk of homelessness.

### CARES Training

In March, PERT developed an 8-hour training course for the new Crisis Assistance Response and Evaluation Services (CARES) Program staff from El Centro as well as staff from the City of Half Moon Bay. The training began with information on San Mateo County's mental health, substance use, and crisis resources, and provided scenarios for staff to practice identifying which resources would be appropriate for different situations.

The second half of the day was spent focusing on working with law enforcement, scene safety/calling for assistance and radio training, de-escalation and disengagement, and restraining orders. PERT provided scenarios for CARES and city staff to think through safety protocols and responding to calls.

Both CARES and city staff were positive about the training and PERT values the opportunity to get to know our new partners on the coast.



Left to right: CARES EMT Kara Ronberg, Sheriff Carlos Bolanos, CARES Project Lead and SUD Counselor Josh DaRosa, El Centro Executive Director Jeff Essex

## Resources



### ACCESS Call Center

ACCESS Call Center is the gateway for mental health and/or substance use services for San Mateo County residents who have Medi-Cal, are Medi-Cal eligible, or are uninsured. Services are provided to children, youth, families, adults, and older adults for the prevention, early intervention, and treatment of mental illness and/or substance use conditions. To request services, contact ACCESS at **1-800-686-0101**.



### NAMI San Mateo County

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) San Mateo County offers support, education, compassion, and practical experience to anyone needing to educate themselves about mental illness and treatment for themselves or a loved one. NAMI provides education classes, presentations, and support groups to the community.

For more information, contact NAMI at [www.namisanmateo.org](http://www.namisanmateo.org) or **650-638-0802**.



### Youth Stabilization, Opportunity, and Support (SOS) Team

The Youth SOS team is a specialized mobile crisis response service for youth. It is a program of StarVista's Crisis Center in partnership with BHRS. The team is designed to respond to children and youth ages 0-25 that are experiencing an escalation of mental health/behavioral symptoms. This is a new resource that can be provided to youth and families in crisis.

**To access the Youth SOS team, a community member will call StarVista's Crisis Hotline: 650-579-0350.** The crisis line worker will begin an assessment over the phone to determine the appropriate response, and whether it needs an in-person response.



### Assisted Outpatient Treatment

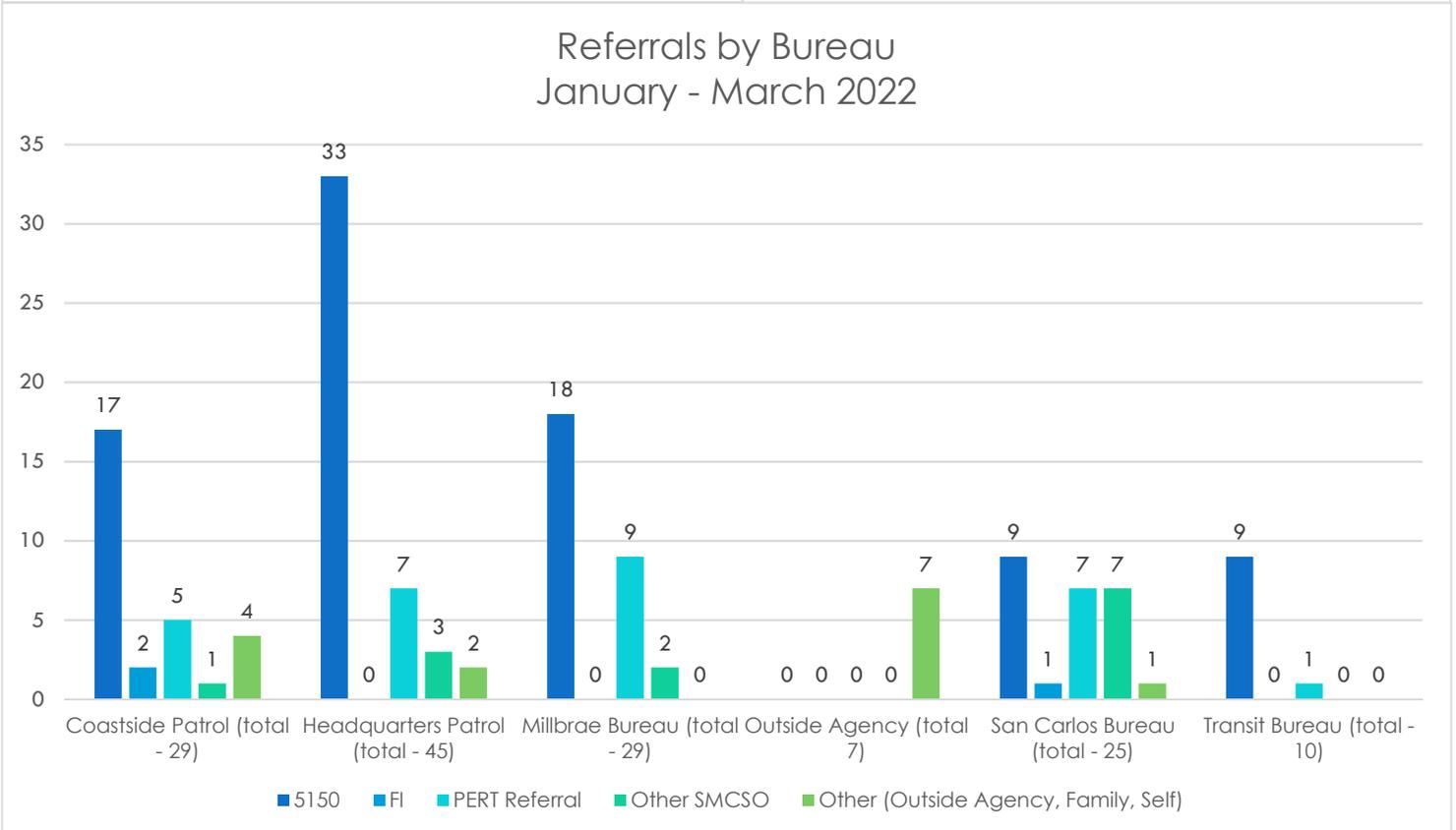
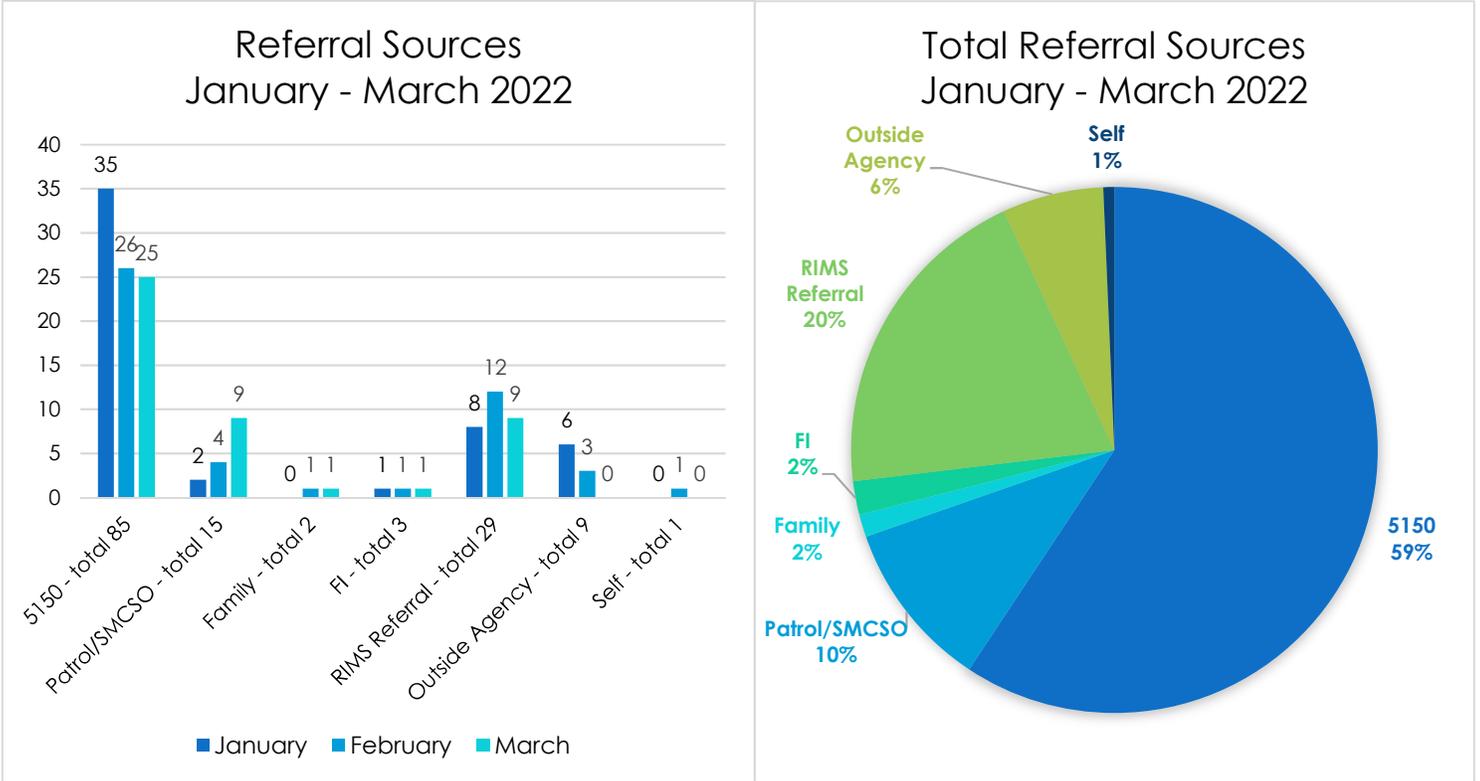
Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) was developed in 2015 out of the County's adoption of Laura's Law (AB 1421). AOT works to engage people who are not connected to treatment.

To be eligible for AOT, a person must meet the following criteria:

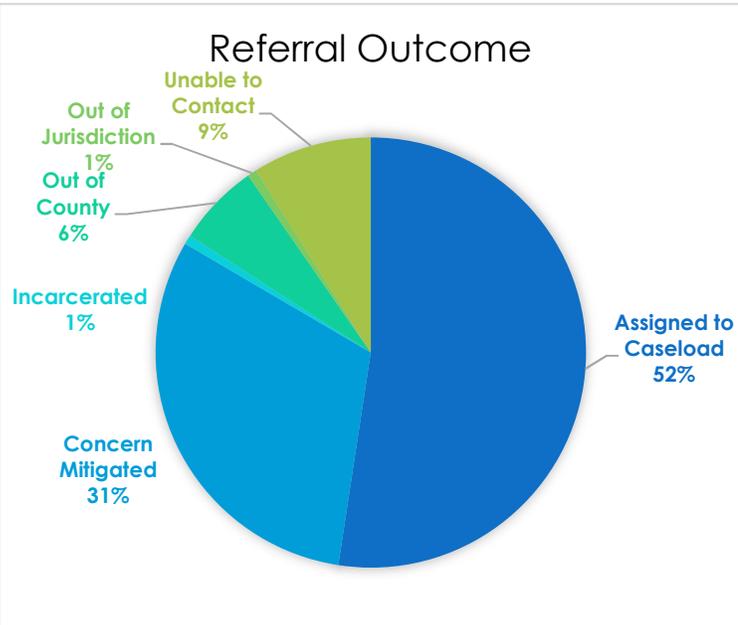
- 18 years old or older, seriously mentally ill, and a San Mateo County resident
- Have a history of not following through with treatment for their mental illness, resulting in:
  - o 2 or more hospitalizations and/or incarcerations in the last 3 years
  - o Having threatened/attempted a significantly dangerous behavior toward themselves/other at least once in the last 2 years

To contact AOT, you can call **650-372-6125** or email [AOT@smcgov.org](mailto:AOT@smcgov.org).

# Quarterly Statistics



# Caseload Statistics



In the first quarter of 2022, PERT received a total of 145 referrals. All referrals are received from deputies, other agencies seeking consultation, or are former PERT clients or families that are reaching back out for support. 76 of those cases, or 52%, were assigned to the PERT caseload and followed up on to assess the needs of the individual and/or family. PERT offers recommendations to applicable services and resources within the county and will, if needed, assist the client with connecting with appropriate resources. If the client is already connected to services, PERT will make attempts to contact their care team to notify them of the contact with the deputies.

