



[Clear Pathways](#), an initiative of [Peg's Foundation](#), is designed to sustainably align systems to improve care for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The Clear Path is a quarterly newsletter that shares the latest developments in behavioral health crisis response across Ohio and the nation.

Dear Friend,

This year, 2026, marks a year of scale for Clear Pathways as we work to transform how communities across Ohio and the nation respond to behavioral health crises. In this issue, we highlight the acceleration of our work through two projects: advancing 911-988 interoperability and building sustainable funding models for adult mobile crisis services. Together, these projects position Ohio as a national leader, and our advancements will inform behavioral health crisis transformation nationwide.



This issue also highlights recent and upcoming Clear Pathways contributions to the field. We're proud to have contributed an expert review to a new multi-state analysis examining how states have leveraged federal funding to expand crisis services over the past decade. You'll also find a roundup of upcoming conference presentations, where we will share findings from our Crisis Response Pilot evaluation and our work to secure sustainable funding for adult mobile crisis services with policymakers nationwide.

As always, we welcome your collaboration as we work together to ensure that everyone experiencing a crisis can have someone to call, someone to come, and somewhere to go.

Does your agency have thoughts, relevant events, or a resource to share? Please send them to our editorial team at clearpathways@pegsfoundation.org.

In partnership,

Alicia D. Smith, Clear Pathways Executive Director

Pathways to Impact: Enhancing 911-988 Interoperability and Securing Sustainable Funding for Adult Mobile Crisis Services

Clear Pathways focuses on two critical gaps in Ohio's crisis response system to make the farthest-reaching impact: advancing 911-988 interoperability and securing sustainable funding for adult mobile crisis services. Our work ensures people experiencing a behavioral health crisis can access appropriate, person-centered care in the least restrictive setting possible.

In 2026, our work accelerates with the launch of two major projects: the **Adult Mobile Crisis Alternative Payment Model Demonstration** and the **911-988 Interoperability Project**. Clear Pathways will work intensively with local Ohio leaders to develop protocols and governance structures, test models, and build an evidence base that can be replicated nationally.

The **Adult Mobile Crisis Alternative Payment Model Demonstration** will determine whether implementing a value-based payment model tied to a newly established program standard can improve financial sustainability and the quality of adult mobile crisis services. This work builds on 2025 efforts that leveraged insights from 20 counties to define standard service models and payment approaches. Our work will be carried out with select Ohio adult mobile crisis providers.

[Learn More About the Adult Mobile Crisis Demonstration](#)

The **911-988 Interoperability Project** will support 911 public safety answering points and 988 crisis center coordination to facilitate call transfers from 911 to 988 and design interoperability metrics. We will provide direct technical assistance to Ohio communities through multiple cycles of pilot testing. We will use the results of our Crisis Response Pilot and evaluation to evolve our interoperability strategy as we work with these sites.

[Learn More About the Interoperability Project](#)

These efforts are further amplified through our role as an Implementing Partner in the Behavioral Health Emergency Response Initiative, which unites proven leaders from Ohio, Michigan, and Texas. This multi-state approach ensures that innovations developed by one partner can inform the others, accelerating progress across all three states and building a roadmap for national impact.

Over the coming months, Clear Pathways will work intensively with chosen sites to test and implement strategies, collaborate with partners, and share learnings with the field. Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) to stay informed of updates, resources, and opportunities.

Advancing the Field of Crisis Response

Clear Pathways Selected for National Initiative to Transform Crisis Response Across Three States

Clear Pathways has joined a three-state collaboration designed to develop transformational, sustainable approaches to community crisis response. The Behavioral Health Emergency Response Initiative (BHERi) brings together Ohio, Michigan, and Texas to improve how

communities responding to the estimated 48 million annual 911 calls that involve someone experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

BHERi is coordinated by NYU's SCALE + Lab at The Marron Institute of Urban Management and funded by Blue Meridian Partners, with additional support from The Pew Charitable Trusts. Clear Pathways joins the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice at Wayne State University (Michigan) and Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (Texas) as implementing partners, working to transform crisis response systems at local, state, and national levels.

Keep Reading

[Clear Pathways Provides Expert Review on New Publication, *How States Leveraged Federal Funding Mechanisms in 2014–2024 to Expand and Enhance Mental Health Crisis Response and Stabilization Services*](#)

Our partners at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, the New York State Psychiatric Institute, and Wayne State University School of Social Work released a new paper analyzing how states have leveraged federal funding opportunities to expand and enhance crisis services. *How States Leveraged Federal Funding Mechanisms in 2014–2024 to Expand and Enhance Mental Health Crisis Response and Stabilization Services* provides a detailed review of commonalities and differences across states. Clear Pathways is proud to have provided a review of this important work and to share how Ohio is transforming crisis response services.

After conducting a multi-state analysis, the authors identified recommendations for federal and state-level policymakers. Relevant to our Adult Mobile Crisis Alternative Payment Model Demonstration work, the authors recommended that local providers should optimize Medicaid billing opportunities across the spectrum of crisis services. Our work in Ohio to build sustainable mobile crisis services is critical.

Read the Paper

Clear Pathways in the Field

Clear Pathways will present at industry conferences this year, sharing our efforts to advance alternative payment models for crisis response models and the results of our [Crisis Response Pilot Evaluation](#) and 911-988 interoperability work in 2026 and beyond.

[NatCon 2026](#)

April 27–29, 2026; Denver, CO

Join Executive Director **Alicia D. Smith**, MHA, for the session, “[Leveraging CMS Crisis Care Guidance: Policy Pathways to Expand Emergency Capable Crisis Services](#).” This session will be held on April 28, from 11:00–12:00 p.m. MT (Education session D13).

Join Assistant Director of Research and Systems Innovation **Cal Jenkins**, MS, and Director, Measurement and Evaluation; Senior Researcher, Mathematica **Robin Lindquist-Grantz**, PhD, at the following events:

[National Association of County Health Officials' Preparedness Summit](#)

April 13–16, 2026; Baltimore, MD and Virtual

Join us for the on-demand session, “Improving Behavioral Health Crisis Response Systems in Ohio: Findings from an Evaluation of a 911/988 Interoperability Pilot.” This session will be recorded and available for registrants throughout the conference.

[NENA: The 911 Association's 2026 Annual Conference and Expo](#)

June 27–July 2, 2026; Columbus, OH

Join us for the session “Improving Interoperability in Behavioral Health Crisis Response.” Doug Jackson, Ohio 988 System Administrator, and Patrick Brandt, Ohio 911 Program Office Administrator, will be joining us as featured speakers.

Partner Webinar: Building the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Workforce

April 8, 2026, 12:00 PM ET

Join the Think Bigger Do Good team for an important conversation on strengthening the behavioral health crisis response workforce. Over the past five years, governments have made significant investments in crisis response systems designed to reduce reliance on law enforcement—but persistent workforce shortages threaten to slow that progress. In this timely webinar, Amy C. Watson, PhD, Kellan McNally, MSW, MA, Leah G. Pope, PhD, and Michael T. Compton, MD, MPH, will explore actionable strategies to build and sustain the crisis response workforce.

Jane Mogavero of the Patrick P. Lee Foundation will moderate the discussion, highlighting expanded training pathways, the creation of a dedicated credential for community behavioral health crisis responders, partnerships with community colleges and regional centers of excellence, the critical importance of sustainable funding to meet growing community demand, and much more.

[Register for the Webinar](#)

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