



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 25-129

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

DATE: August 11, 2025

SUBJECT: Fort Lauderdale Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program Update

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the City Commission on the City's Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program.

Background

Florida Department of Health prehospital data for 2020 revealed that 44% of statewide Emergency Medical Service (EMS) transports were non-emergent or preventable through primary care. These non-emergent events place significant operational strain on traditional EMS and first responder systems. The needs of non-emergent and low acuity patients are better served through patient-centered solutions that provide high quality onsite care rather than transport to a hospital emergency department.

The concept of Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue's Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program began in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. What started as an initiative to reach individuals unable to access vaccination sites, quickly developed into a program assisting clients who frequently misused the 911 system. This program received funding and support from the City Commission during the Fiscal Year 2023 budget in the amount of \$357,379.00 and has since grown into one of the most comprehensive and impactful nurse-led prevention programs in Broward County.

Update

The MIH program continues to increase system efficiency while delivering compassionate, targeted care to our community. To track program activity, we began capturing data through ImageTrend software in October 2024. During the transition to this new platform, we identified over 500 client contacts. We are now able to utilize the data, which is essential to providing follow-up, client-centered care. Unlike initial contacts, which often focus on immediate concerns, follow-up interactions provide a deeper understanding of the client's situation over time.

Since data collection began, more than 80% of clients enrolled into the program have social service needs such as home healthcare, assisted living facility (ALF) placement, pregnancy/youth outreach and case management. While data points like call volume reduction and hospital readmission rates are important, the success of the MIH program can't be fully captured by numbers alone. The true impact of MIH lies in lives touched, the relationships built with vulnerable populations, the trust earned in the community, and the preventative interventions that never become statistics.

Key highlights of the program:

- Collaborating with EMS and local healthcare providers to build a referral network
- Supporting public education around non-emergency resources and preventive care
- Assisting in the development of data tracking systems for follow-ups and outcome evaluation
- Exploring potential partnerships and funding opportunities to expand the program's reach
- Identifies community needs by analyzing service gaps, and incorporating input from local partners and residents.

As the MIH program grows, the focus is shifting beyond just emergency response. The MIH program is expanding its focus to support community providers and vulnerable populations.

Below are some of the current and upcoming programs in development:

- **Homeless Outreach** – Coordinating with housing and social service agencies to connect individuals with appropriate resources. Preparing to develop pathways for direct referrals to shelters and mental health services. These efforts aim to proactively address social determinants of health and reduce system strain through early intervention.
- **Mommy and Me** – Collaboration with Healthy Start to assist with family needs in our community.
- **Children's Diagnostic and Treatment Center** – A collaborative approach to connect children in the community with healthcare solutions
- **Fall Reduction/Prevention** – Identifying at-risk individuals through home assessments, providing safety education, and connecting them to supportive services, the program aims to reduce fall-related injuries and hospital visits.
- **Co-Responder with Fort Lauderdale Police Department** – Integrates medical, mental health, and social support alongside emergency services. The program reduces unnecessary transports and de-escalates potentially volatile situations.
- **Opioid/Substance Use Disorder** – Identifying and engaging individuals at risk of overdose. Assisting field teams with documenting post-overdose follow-ups and connections to treatment and recovery resources.

How the program has evolved

In Fiscal Year 2025, Fire Rescue gained 2 new fulltime employees; one Community Paramedic and one Community Health Coordinator. We're excited to announce that, thanks to funding from the Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) grant provided by the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition (BBHC), we are again expanding the program to include a third member, an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP). This addition will amplify our efforts in addressing the substance abuse crisis in our community. The goal of this initiative is to support individuals struggling with opioid use disorder (OUD). According to the Broward County Medical Examiner's Office, there were 441 accidental overdose deaths in 2024, 28% of which occurred in the City of Fort Lauderdale, the highest in the county. This expanded program will enable us to collaborate with a wide range of external partners listed below:

- FLPD Co-Responder Program (Dr. Perez)
- Broward Health IMATR Program
- Fort Lauderdale Behavioral Health Center
- South Florida Wellness Network
- Henderson Behavioral
- Broward Behavioral Health Coalition

Alternative Funding Source

To assist the development of the MIH Program in addressing community needs, City staff applied for and have received grants from the Department of Health (DOH) and the Broward County Health Coalition for a total of \$500,000.

For further information, please contact Fire Chief Stephen Gollan, at 954-828-6863 or sgollan@fortlauderdale.gov

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