



CENTRAL KITSAP
FIRE & RESCUE

CK CARES
COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE, REFERRAL, AND
EDUCATION SERVICE





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Central Kitsap Fire, Centralia Fire Department,
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What is CARES?

- CK CARES partners a firefighter/paramedic and social worker as a team to respond to behavioral health events.
- CARES helps citizens who call 911 who don't need to go to the hospital get connected with resources.
- Resources can be everything from scheduled transportation for primary care to initial psychiatric evaluations to registering for EBT food assistance to direct transport to chemical dependency treatment.



History?

- Historically the Fire Department only responded to fires. In 1942, the citizens in the Silverdale area petitioned for the formation of a fire district to protect their area.
- 1970's brought EMT's and 1980's brought paramedics into the fire service.
- The last 30 years we have seen a greater reliance on 911 as a primary point of contact for persons in crisis and the Fire Service was ill equipped and ill trained to meet the needs of behavioral health events. We lacked a diverse workforce, limited cultural competence and trauma informed care was outside of our sphere.



What is Behavioral Health?

- Behavioral Health generally refers to mental health and substance use disorders, life stressors and crises, and stress-related physical symptoms. Everything from schizophrenia to drug addiction to a family caring for a high needs relative.
- Many times, behavioral health events can be managed without a trip to the emergency room. Unfortunately, EMS has limited ability to offer alternatives other than transport to the ER.



Why CARES?

- First responders are uniquely positioned help citizens in a behavioral health crisis because of the 911 nexus, we see citizens in their greatest moment of need. Every year over 10,000 citizens in CK put their hand up by dialing 911 and ask for help during a crisis.
- CARES gives Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue the ability to serve our citizens beyond a 30-minute 911 call and connect citizens with resources, so they don't need to rely on 911 for non-emergent care.



Why CARES?

- Firefighters, EMT's and Paramedics are not trained or equipped to meet the needs of complex behavioral health patients.
- Connecting a citizen who does not need transport to the ER with a behavioral health specialist like a CARES social worker is a better use of taxpayer resources.
- The goal of the CARES program is to empower citizens to be more self-reliant and decrease suffering.



- In 2019 CKFR responded to 5,828 calls for medical aid.

Calls by Disposition 2019	Number of Calls
Substance Abuse	179
Anxiety/Emotional Disturbance	207
Suicide Attempt/ Ideation	30
Altered Mental Status	215
Behavioral Psychiatric Episode	96
Confusion Delirium	48
Obvious Death	73
Sexual Abuse	2
Total Behavioral Health	850 (14.6% of total calls)

CK CARES Program

- In 2021 CKFR responded to 6,525 calls for medical aid.

Calls by Disposition 2021	Number of Calls
Substance Abuse	378
Anxiety/Emotional Disturbance	260
Suicide Attempt/ Ideation	76
Altered Mental Status	239
Behavioral Psychiatric Episode	144
Confusion Delirium	46
Obvious Death	106
Sexual Abuse	3
Total Behavioral Health	1,252 (17.6% of total calls)

CK CARES

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE, REFERRAL, AND EDUCATION SERVICE

In 2022 CKFR leadership identified Community Engagement as an overarching strategic goal with the objective of connecting meaningfully and effectively with Central Kitsap to keep our community safe and informed.

- A key performance indicator was to identify and deploy funding for a CARES unit to respond to behavioral health event.
- In late 2022 grant funding was secured through the Kitsap County 1/10th of 1% mental health/substance abuse tax grant and the AWC Co-responder grant to fund a CARES program in Central Kitsap. Recently received a Olympic Community of Health grant to fund a partnership with Kitsap Recovery Center to embed an SUDP into all Kitsap Fire CARES teams.

CK CARES TEAM

- Alex McCracken, Medical Officer, CARES Program manager
- Kloe Tran, Social worker, MSW
- Jesse Graham, Paramedic Firefighter, B.S. Public Health
- Poulsbo Fire CARES
- KCSO



What does CARES do?

- CK CARES delivers a subject matter expert in behavioral health, the CARES social worker to our citizens in need.
- CK CARES creates relationships with our citizens and identifies the resources best suited to meet their individual needs.
- CK CARES links citizens in need with existing community partners like KMH, DHSS and the VA to provide solutions to behavioral health problems.



How does CARES respond?

- CK CARES responds to internal referrals from Firefighters and Paramedics who see a citizen in need. The emphasis will be behavioral health events such as suicidal ideations/attempts, overdoses, psychiatric events and failure to thrive.
- CK CARES has a partnership with KCSO and responds to external referrals from KCSO officers if the citizen lives in Central Kitsap.
- CK CARES also responds to mutual aid requests from Poulsbo Fire CARES.



Questions?