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SHERIFF OF ERIE COUNTY

September 18, 2026

The Honorable
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin St.
Buffalo, NY 14202

Re: Behavioral Threat Assessment Team Psychiatry Services

Honorable Members:

Attached, please find a proposed resolution and accompanying memorandum authorizing the County Executive and Sheriff to enter into an agreement with University Psychiatric Practice, Inc. to provide psychiatric services for the Erie County Sheriff's Office Behavioral Threat Assessment Team.

Representatives of my Office will be made available upon request to answer any questions you may have.

Very Truly Yours,

John C. Garcia
Sheriff of Erie County

Attachments

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Erie County Sheriff's Office
Re: Behavioral Threat Assessment Team Psychiatry Services
Date: September 18, 2026

Summary of Recommended Action

Approval of this item will authorize the County to enter into an agreement with University Psychiatric Practice, Inc. (UPP). Under the agreement, UPP will provide in-person consultation and evaluation of individuals identified by the Erie County Sheriff's Office Behavioral Threat Assessment Team (BTAT) in order to mitigate future risk of violence. These services will be provided by psychiatrists or psychologists trained in forensic and clinical psychiatry and psychology. Importantly, these evaluations are completely voluntary and at the discretion of the individuals identified (or in the case of a minor, their parents or guardians). Neither BTAT nor UPP will coerce anyone into receiving an evaluation.

Fiscal Implications of Proposal

The County shall compensate UPP at a rate of \$300 per hour for these services. Money has been allocated in the 2026 Erie County Sheriff's Office Police Services Division operating budget (Fund 110, Funds Center 11510). No new money is being requested for allocation in 2026. Funds will be appropriately budgeted in future years.

Reasons for Recommendation

Weeks after the racially motivated shooting on Jefferson Ave. in Buffalo on May 14, 2022, Sheriff Garcia launched BTAT with the support of this Honorable Body. It is the mission of this branch of the Erie County Sheriff's Office Investigative Services Unit to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the diverse communities of Erie County by investigating and managing individuals who have demonstrated abnormal, threatening or obsessive behaviors that can lead to violence. BTAT is part of the Erie County Threat Assessment Committee, which has a collective goal of improving and streamlining targeted violence threat response protocols and strives for seamless sharing of threat information across systems.

After BTAT detectives identify an individual who may be on the pathway to violence but has not yet committed a crime, the most we can presently do is strongly encourage them to seek psychiatric care. With this agreement with UPP in place, we will now have the ability to offer them a specific and immediate resource that can provide an evaluation at no cost to the individual.

Specifically with respect to minors who are the subjects of threat investigations, it is our experience that parents are often desperate for help and amenable to working with our detectives to get their children psychiatric care. This agreement will provide that avenue.

Consequences of Negative Action

The County would be unable to contract with UPP for psychiatric services and BTAT would be required to continue operating without this important resource.

Steps Following Approval of Measure

Certified copies shall be forwarded to the County Executive, County Attorney, Division of Budget and Management, Comptroller, Purchasing Director and Erie County Sheriff's Office.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
ERIE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Re: Behavioral Threat Assessment Team Psychiatry Services

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Erie County Sheriff's Office to provide quality public safety services to our community by promoting a safe environment through police and citizen interaction with an emphasis on integrity, fairness and professionalism; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the Erie County Sheriff's Office created the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team (BTAT); and

WHEREAS, this team is comprised of Investigative Services Unit detectives who are trained to identify individuals who have demonstrated abnormal, threatening or obsessive behaviors that can lead to violence; and

WHEREAS, as part of their work, BTAT detectives maintain liaisons with mental health professionals and other community stakeholders with a collective goal of preventing targeted acts of violence; and

WHEREAS, BTAT and Erie County at large would benefit from a partnership with University Psychiatric Practice, Inc. (UPP), under which UPP psychiatrists and psychologists would provide evaluations of individuals identified by the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team in order to mitigate future risk of violence; and

WHEREAS, legislative approval of this partnership and agreement is required;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, the Erie County Legislature authorizes the County Executive and Sheriff to enter into an agreement with University Psychiatric Practice, Inc., 462 Grider Street, Buffalo, New York 14215 for the purpose of providing in-person consultation and evaluation of individuals identified by the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Erie County Legislature waives the procedures, as impractical, provided for in Section 26.08 of the Erie County Administrative Code for the purposes of engaging with University Psychiatric Practice, Inc. to provide consultations and evaluations of individuals identified through investigations; and be it further

RESOLVED, certified copies shall be forwarded to the County Executive, County Attorney, Division of Budget and Management, Comptroller, Purchasing Director and Erie County Sheriff's Office.

FISCAL IMPACT: As Indicated