

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY AND NEW ROCHELLE POLICE DEPARTMENT JOIN FORCES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Department of Community Mental Health pairs treatment professionals with New Rochelle Police Officers to assist with mental health, substance use, homelessness and other needs

(White Plains, NY) – In a partnership that will better connect individuals struggling with substance use or mental health illness with the treatment they need, the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH), New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson and New Rochelle City Manager Chuck Strone announced the expansion of the County’s DCMH Co-Response Program. The purpose of the Co-Response Program is to unite a New Rochelle Police Officer with a treatment professional while they are out on patrol, improving the overall response to substance use, mental health issues, homelessness and other needs in the community.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said: “The DCMH Co-Response Program has already proven to be tremendously successful in other communities like Yonkers, White Plains and Greenburgh, and we believe expanding to the City of New Rochelle is the next logical step towards improving our response County-wide. By having one of our DCMH professionals working in tandem with New Rochelle Police, we will improve our ability to get people who want help off the streets and connected with the appropriate support services or treatment in a more efficient way.”

New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson said: “Through this enhanced partnership, City and County officials are better able to address the challenge of homelessness in an effective and humane fashion. By connecting vulnerable individuals to support services, we enable more people to overcome obstacles and enjoy stable, rewarding lives, even as we make New Rochelle as a whole more vibrant, attractive and equitable.”

Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health Michael Orth said: “The goal of the Department of Community Mental Health is to work with each and every community in Westchester to ensure that people’s needs are being met. This co-location model has been an extremely effective tool in serving communities, and we are happy to be able to expand this to another major city. This model furthers the goal of meeting people where they are and connecting them to the services they need.”

New Rochelle Police Commissioner Joseph F. Schaller said: “The New Rochelle Police Department has always been attentive to the needs of the homeless in our community. As first responders, however, police personnel are limited in what they can accomplish in providing more enduring and effective services to them. Our new partnership with the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health is providing us with a much needed resource to develop a more comprehensive and effective program for dealing with the homeless population in our community.”

Known as “police embeds,” DCMH first began using the model in 2005 in Yonkers and White Plains, but since 2018 has nearly doubled their presence with staff in Greenburgh and New Rochelle. The model partners police officers with behavioral mental health workers in the community, to respond to calls and develop relationships with individuals who need support, assistance and guidance in connecting to services such as housing, treatment and recovery. The success of the Co-Response Program is two-fold – both in providing enhanced services and response to community needs, as well as increasing safety for police officers and residents.

Several factors led to the expansion of the program to New Rochelle, and the New Rochelle Police Department. As one of the County’s largest cities with a growing population of about 80,000, people seeking housing, mental health and substance use treatment were regularly coming in contact with law enforcement professionals.

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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