

2023 MAT-SU CRISIS NOW ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE MAT-SU HEALTH
FOUNDATION

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Actionable Data Consulting

Executive Summary

The Mat-Su Behavioral Health Crisis System is based on the Crisis Now Model¹ and has been developed strategically and in partnership with community organizations since 2021. Funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Mat-Su Health Foundation and others, this system is specifically designed to respond to residents in behavioral health crisis and provide immediate care and support, while working to avert future crisis. In late March 2023, the True North Recovery Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) launched and provided support for residents in behavioral health crisis within the Wasilla City limits. This team is supported by the dispatchers at MATCOM who take the initial call and a post crisis network composed of 18 community organizations.² This network called the Community Care Team, provides services and support to individuals after the MCT intervention. These two teams work closely with other crisis services providers in Mat-Su that include:

1. Alaska Family Services Domestic Violence Shelter
2. Set Free Alaska Crisis Residential Stabilization Services
3. True North Recovery Day One Center
4. Mat-Su Health Services
5. The Mat-Su Valley, Alaska Alliance for Drug Endangered Children
6. The Daybreak Drop-in Center

Additionally, the MCT coordinates with the statewide Alaska Careline (988) that provides telephonic support for callers in behavioral health crisis. In 2024, the MCT expanded services to Palmer and the greater Mat-Su core area.

The MCT responds to the following types of emergencies:

1. Domestic violence calls
2. People with alcohol and drug abuse crisis
3. Driving under the influence calls
4. Child abuse situations
5. House fires
6. Vehicle repossession where people will be homeless
7. Loss of life calls
8. People with suicidal ideation
9. Calls requiring family mediation
10. Calls involving disoriented older adults
11. Calls involving veterans in crisis
12. Youth having experienced trauma

Key highlights for the MCT in 2023 include:

- MATCOM received 287 calls for the MCT and the MCT responded to 208 unique clients.
- Most clients were left in the community after the call (49%) and 22% were transported by MCT. If the MCT transported a client to the hospital they provide a care plan to hospital staff to ensure appropriate behavioral health care.
- Forty percent of clients were facing mental health issues only and 36% had co-occurring disorders; 15% faced substance use issues only; and 9% were experiencing suicidal ideation. A single client could be suicidal and have another issue.
- The Community Care Team helped 31 clients connect to the post crisis services that they needed.
- 970 Mat-Su residents received support and services from the Alaska Careline (988).

¹ The Crisis Now Model is a continuum of three components that work to prevent suicide and costly use of the emergency department and corrections system. The model includes a Crisis Call Center, a Mobile Crisis Team, and Crisis Stabilization Facilities. See <https://crisisnow.com/about-crisis-now/> for a more extensive description.

² The Community Care Team is not part of the Crisis Now Model and is a unique and important component developed in Mat-Su to prevent future crises.

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Background

The Crisis Now model is a continuum of three components (crisis call center, mobile crisis team(s), and crisis stabilization center) that work to prevent suicide, reduce the use of emergency departments and correctional settings, and provide the best supports for individuals in crisis. As shown in Figure 1, the Behavioral Health Emergency System parallels the Physical Health Emergency system with a common goal of aiding a person in crisis and finding the most appropriate care options to provide needed assistance.

Figure 1.



Source: Agnew Beck Consulting, Anchorage, Alaska, 2021

Crisis Now in Mat-Su

The development of the Mat-Su Behavioral Health Emergency System began in 2021 with the hiring of a Mat-Su Crisis Now Community coordinator (Melissa Toffolon, MPH, PhD) who facilitated the development of two workgroups, the Crisis Call Center/Mobile Crisis Team Workgroup (CCC/MCT) and the Outpatient/Connector Workgroup (O/C). Fast forward to 2023 and these workgroups were still meeting and ready to implement the blueprint for emergency behavioral health care that would work in the Mat-Su.

The Mat-Su Mobile Crisis Team

The Mat-Su Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) from True North Recovery was launched in March 2023 to serve residents within the Wasilla City limits who are experiencing a behavioral health emergency. The MCT operated 24 hours a day, 7 days per week and is composed of a licensed behavioral health practitioner and a peer support worker³. The team is funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and follows the best practices of the Crisis Now model and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

³ A peer support worker is a trained support person for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. They have “lived experience” with behavioral health crisis and are adapt at supporting others in their crisis.

The mission of this team is:

To respond to, mitigate and care for Wasilla residents experiencing crisis in partnership with local law enforcement and emergency responders. The crisis team aims to get the right services, to the right people, at the right time while reducing the burden on EMS, police, local emergency departments, and correctional facilities. The MCT will provide crisis response, follow up care and ongoing support and services to accomplish this mission.

In 2023, the MCT was dispatched by MATCOM which also dispatches the Wasilla Police Department (WPD), the Alaska State Troopers (AST), the Matanuska Susitna Borough EMS and Fire Department. When an emergency call comes in that involves the WPD, the officer will decide if the individual(s) they are responding to would benefit from MCT response. EMS also began calling for the MCT when they encountered individuals and their caretakers in Wasilla who were experiencing behavioral health problems. Examples of typical MCT calls are:

1. Domestic violence calls
2. People with alcohol and drug abuse crisis
3. Driving under the influence calls
4. Child abuse situations
5. House fires
6. Vehicle repossession where people will be homeless
7. Loss of life calls
8. People with suicidal ideation
9. Calls requiring family mediation
10. Calls involving disoriented senior citizens
11. Calls involving veterans in crisis
12. Youth having experienced trauma

The Community Care Team (formerly the Post-Crisis Network)

In late May of 2023, the Mat-Su Post Crisis Network began providing services. This effort was led by Connect Mat-Su and has the following mission:

To support residents of Mat-Su who are experiencing behavioral health crisis. The goal of the Team is to support people who have experienced a crisis to recover and thrive and be better able to handle adversity in the future. The intent of this approach is to prevent people from having reoccurring crises that require emergency assistance.

This network, later renamed the Community Care Team (CCT), is composed of two types of organizations. Organizations that employ “connectors.” These are community health workers, care coordinators, peer support workers, and case managers. These professionals are “on call” to receive a warm handoff from the MCT and help an individual in crisis get the immediate support they need after the initial MCT visit. Another main component of the CCT are organizations that will receive the referrals from the MCT and connectors and are ready to serve these individuals providing the inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services needed to prevent further crises. Connect Mat-Su organizes the network and provides information and referral to MCT clients and other members of the network. By the end of 2023, there have been 18 organizations who have signed up to participate in the CCT. They met quarterly in 2023 to coordinate services with the MCT and each other. In 2023, thirty-one clients who were referred from the MCT received services through the CCT.

As of the end of 2023, the following organizations were part of the CCT:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Alaska Addiction Rehabilitation Services, Inc. | 7. Denali Family Services | 14. Set Free Alaska |
| 2. Alaska Family Services | 8. Daybreak, Incorporated | 15. Southcentral Foundation |
| 3. Alaska Therapeutic Courts | 9. Family Promise | 16. Sunshine Community Health Center |
| 4. Alaska Youth and Family Network | 10. LINK Mat-Su Resource Center | 17. True North Recovery |
| 5. Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska | 11. Mat-Su Health Foundation-Connect Mat-Su | 18. Valley Charities |
| 6. Connect Palmer | 12. Mat-Su Health Services | |
| | 13. MyHouse | |

Other Mat-Su Crisis Services

There are several other entities in Mat-Su that respond to individuals who are in behavioral health crisis. All these entities have been involved with the crisis planning, meet regularly, and coordinate their services to put the individual first in receiving the care and support that they need. These other crisis response organizations include:

1. Alaska Careline (988) accepts calls from Mat-Su residents who are in behavioral health crisis. They will refer to MATCOM if in-person intervention is needed.
2. Alaska Family Services Domestic Violence Shelter has a 24/7 hotline and provides advocacy and support to survivors through a 32-bed shelter.
3. Mat-Su Health Services provides crisis intervention services through a 24/7 hotline and walk-in appointments during business hours.
4. Set Free Alaska Crisis Residential Stabilization Services provide medically necessary behavioral health services to individuals in direct response to a crisis with a safe homelike environment of 24/7 monitored care.
5. True North Recovery Day One Center provides walk-in crisis services at their Launch Pad in Wasilla.
6. The Mat-Su Valley, Alaska Alliance for Drug Endangered Children Initiative works with first responders to provide early intervention for children and their families who live in drug environments that generate cycles of misuse, abuse and neglect.
7. Daybreak Drop-in Center located in Palmer provides navigation assistance for those experiencing homelessness or struggling with mental health or substance abuse disorders.

Mobile Crisis Team 2023 Statistics

The MCT launched in March. In 2023, the MCT responded to 208 unique clients. MATCOM received 287 calls for the MCT. Some of the MATCOM calls did not result in a response from the MCT because the call was cancelled by other first responders and some of the calls were for individuals who were seen more than once by the MCT.

MATCOM classifies MCT calls into five levels:

- Level 1: Law enforcement leads.
 - Level 2: MCT leads with law enforcement in background.
 - Level 3: MCT lifeline – MCT leads and law enforcement is on standby via phone.
 - Level 4: MCT responds alone
 - Level 5: MCT clinician responds alone.
- Seventy-five percent of the MCT calls were level 1. The next most common call level was level three (13%).

Most clients were left in the community after the call (49%); 22% were transported by the MCT. Ten percent were left with law enforcement, 11% left with EMS, and 4% refused services at the call. If the MCT transported a client to the hospital they provide a care plan to hospital staff to ensure appropriate behavioral health care.

Figure 1. Number of MATCOM MCT calls per month, 2023

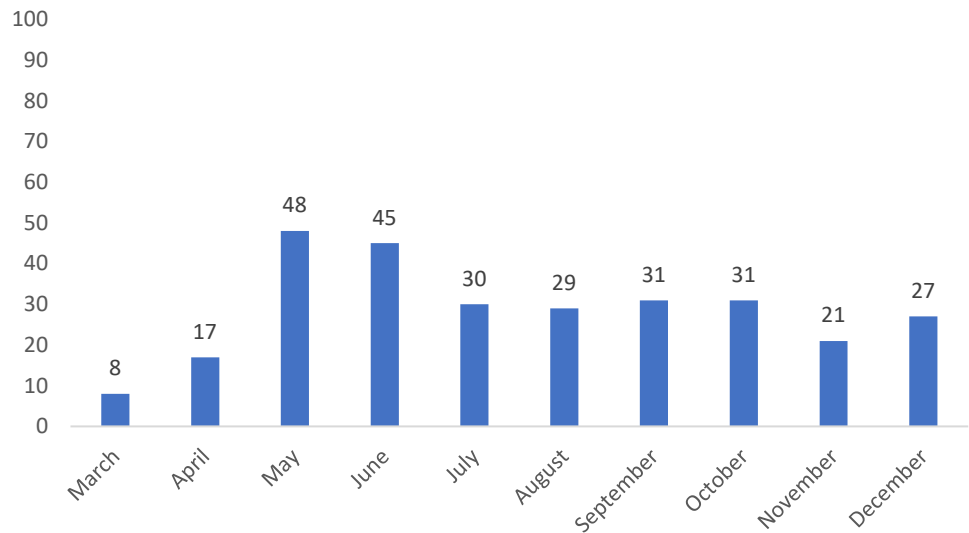


Figure 2. Level of MATCOM MCT Call (%), 2023

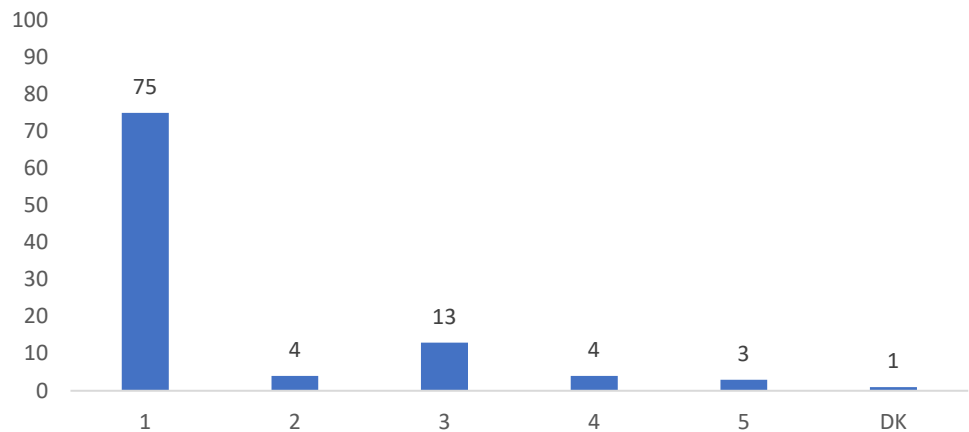
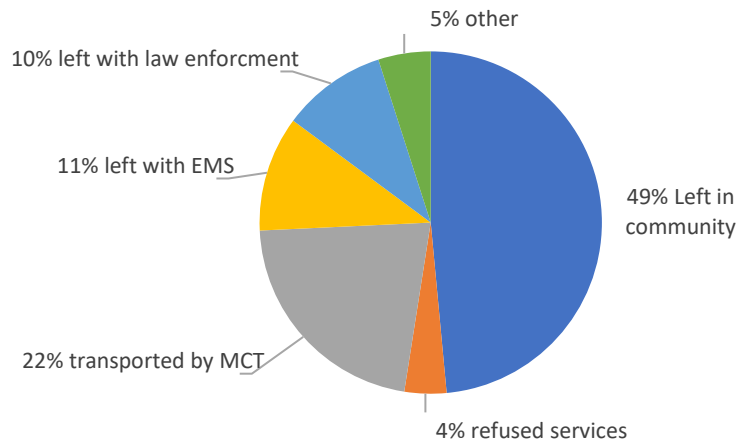
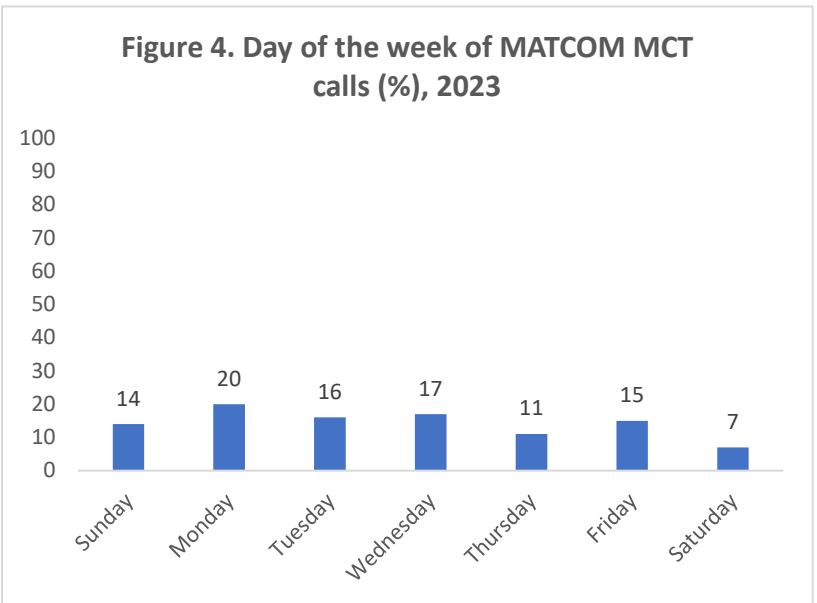


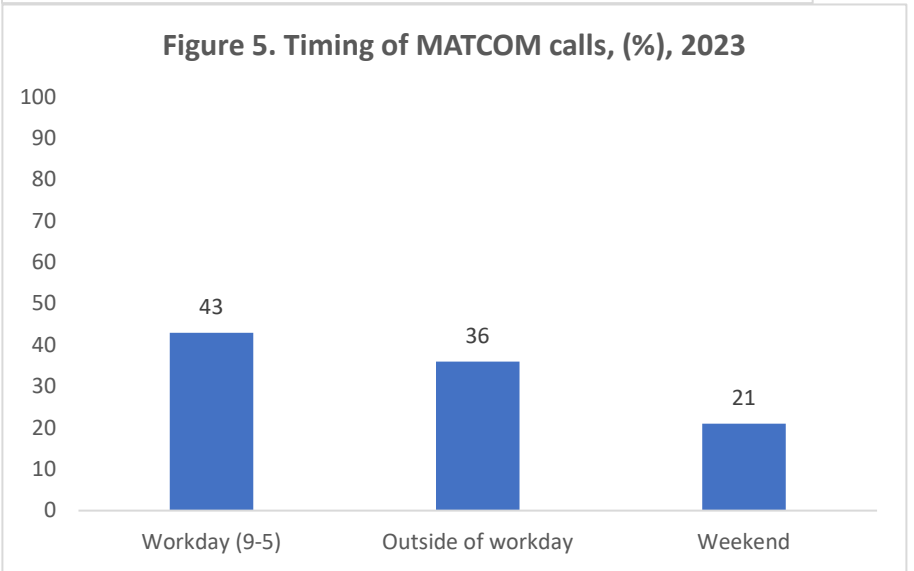
Figure 3. Disposition of MATCOM MCT calls (%), 2023



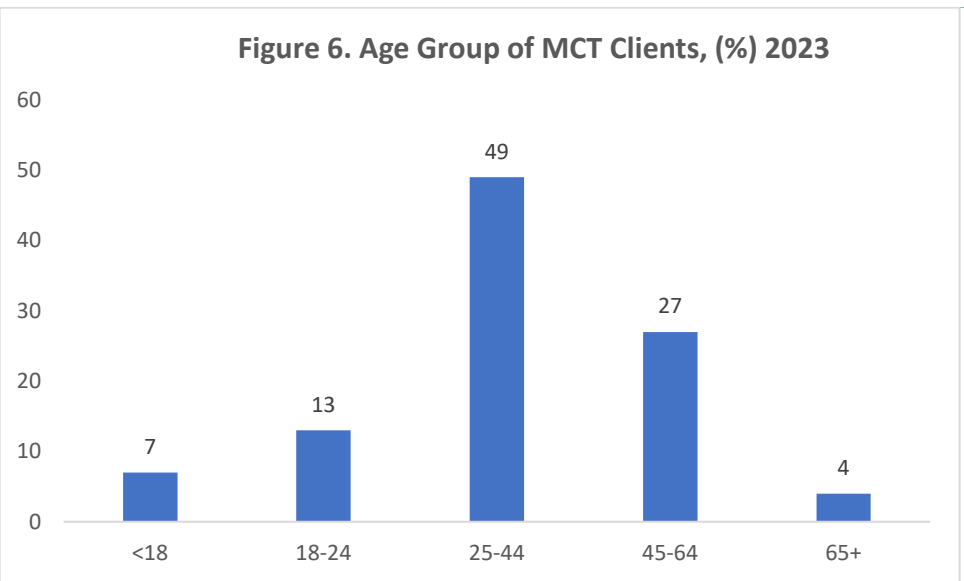
The MATCOM calls were spread out through the week. The most calls (20%) occurred on Monday and the least on Saturday (9%)



Most calls (43%) occurred Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Thirty-six percent of the calls occurred outside of the workday Monday-Friday and 21% occurred on the weekend.



49% of clients were between the ages of 25-44 years; 27% were between the ages of 45-64 years; 13% were between 18-24 percent; 7% were under the age of 18 years and 4% were 65+ years.



Forty percent of clients were facing mental health issues only and 36% had co-occurring disorders; 15% faced substance use disorder (SUD) issues only; and 9% were experiencing suicidal ideation. A single client could be suicidal and have another issue.

Figure 7. Challenge of MCT Client (%), 2023

