

RCMP-GRC



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE • GENDARMERIE ROYALE DU CANADA

Mobile Integrated Crisis Response (MICR)

Island Health and Comox Valley RCMP
Collaborative Initiative

2025/2026



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada



Pathway to Partnership

In November 2024, Comox Detachment began early discussions with the City of Courtenay on non-traditional policing methods that could benefit the Comox Valley.

Between January 2025 and February 2025 - these conversations led to dialogue with Island Health Medical Health Officer: Dr. Charmaine Enns and later North Island Mental Health and Substance Use Services Director: Lesley Howie on the possibility of creating a local initiative to help address rising mental health concerns in the Comox Valley. Observable data revealed an increase from 3% to 10% call volume and workload for crisis.

In April 2025, RCMP Town Halls led by Insp. Scott Mercer with Municipalities identified Mental Health as a prevalent community issue and focus of concern



Pathway to Partnership

cont.

In May 2025, Comox Valley RCMP and Island Health continued meetings to discuss options for funding with respect to a collaborative initiative to address frontline mental health concerns. The Ministry of Health supported this idea but could not provide the funding commitments at the time.

Informing the City of Courtenay of our intent to create a Mobile Integrated Crisis Response (MICR) Team consisting of a mental health trained police resource and a psychiatric trained health resource – Courtenay CAO requested a “proof of concept” before any funding considerations could be made.

From May 2025 to September 2025 – an agreement was made between Island Health and the Detachment to allocate 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) from each Agency for a period of 6 to 9 months. This agreement led to security clearances, training, equipment allocation, defining role and responsibilities and a MOU review.



Purpose

On September 20, 2025, Island Health Mental Health and Substance Use Services Comox Valley and Comox Valley RCMP launched a 9 month proactive initiative to meet mental health concerns at the street level and demonstrate its value to the City of Courtenay and the greater Comox Valley.

MICR consists of 2 persons:

- Registered Psychiatric Nurse – Tara Wyton; *
- Mental Health Liaison Officer – Constable Greg Hall. *

Their interim Work Schedule is 4 days on 4 days off from 0700 hrs to 1900 hrs. **



Program Services

Our MICR responses may include:

- Phone assessment and support;
- Outreach assessment and support;
- Work with individuals who could benefit from a mental health assessment of supportive community plan;
- Apprehensions under the Mental Health Act;
- Support individuals on arrival to hospital, through triage process and to the receiving unit;
- On scene support, or direct consult for RCMP members;
- Referrals and bridging to other Community and Health Services.



Program Objectives

Island Health

- To reduce the number of RCMP presentations with individuals requiring assessments at the Emergency Department (ED) while ensuring those that are admitted meet mental health thresholds improving ED triage and in-house crisis service workloads;
- Enhance mental health engagement with persons experiencing a crisis to prevent decompensate, rather than presenting for acute MHSU and medical attention;
- Increase the number of deferrals / connections to community teams.

Comox Valley RCMP

- To reduce the number of calls for service for frontline members with respect to mental health;
- To reduce the time on scene and at Hospital for frontline members and return to their substantive policing duties.



Island Health Review

Initiative Hypotheses:

- It was anticipated that involving an advanced practice nurse to assess people during RCMP encounters would clarify need for further health interventions, enhance transition to hospital and reduce wait times for individual and subsequent RCMP standby times when persons were escorted to the Emergency Department (ED);
- An increase in the ratio of admits to presentations at the ED with RCMP indicating that appropriate attendance at ED for mental health care is occurring. This would have a beneficial impact on ED triage and in house crisis service workload.



Island Health Review Cont..

Since September 2025:

- There has been increased education to the public regarding access, assessments and supports from MICR and Acute MHSU Crisis Services;
- Dedicated MICR team have established themselves with the RCMP, Island Health, Hospital Staff and Community as a trusted partner;
- Widening access to acute crisis interventions from MICR helped to facilitate appropriate admissions and prevent decompensation of those needing mental health care by intervening sooner;
- We learned equivalent volumes of people were reaching out to EHS for high acuity crisis that were presenting to the ED Crisis team;
- MICR built relationships that fostered trust, deescalated situations, enhanced supports and provided seamless connections to health services preventing repeat ED admissions;
- There have been enhanced transitions in care between community MICR to acute MHSU Crisis Service resulting in decreased wait time for individuals and RCMP at ED.



Island Health Review Cont..

Hypotheses and Initiative Results:

We anticipated bringing MICR modeled acute Crisis Service further into the Community would result in a decrease in people presenting to ED.

- MICR created an increase in MHSU nursing presence on calls. This saw an increase of 90.6% people seen per day for acute MHSU crisis assessments between September 2025 and April 2026.

We anticipated that MICR service would decrease call volume for Acute Crisis Service

- Since the onset of MICR the total call volume of acute crisis response was up by 74% from the last year during the same period:
 - September 2024 to April 2025: 912 Crisis encounters and 2707 follow up Crisis Nursing interventions;
 - September 2025 to April 2026: 495 MICR + 1092 Crisis = 1587 encounters with 723 MICR nursing interventions and 2624 Crisis Nursing interventions = 3541 total follow up interventions.



Island Health Review Cont..

Hypotheses and Initiative Results Cont...

By triaging people within the Community, we anticipated we would increase the appropriateness of arrivals to ED and decrease the number of representations and admits:

- Of 495 MICR encounters 482 were managed in Community with de-escalation, MICR nursing interventions, medication management, enhanced collaborative care planning liaison with GP or Psychiatrist, family and Community supports, resources and connection to service. 41 encounters resulted use of Mental Health Act and transport to hospital for further assessment;
- 68.5% of all people in Crisis situations seen by MICR required follow up from MICR for wrap around care after they were assessed;
- Decrease re-presentations / admissions to ED;
- Data related to unique individuals who had repeat presentations to ED now receive care from MICR in Community which has reduced rate of presentation and admissions due to enhanced care planning.



Comox Valley RCMP Review

Since the first shift on September 23, 2025:

- MICR has worked on 190 police files and conducted additional oversight / follow up – 219 times;
- 75% of these files occurred in the City of Courtenay; *
- Between October 2025 and January 2026, the MICR team did as many Mental Health apprehensions as a General Duty Watch;
- 58% of the files MICR assisted on were Mental Health Act or Check Well Being.



Comox Valley RCMP Review cont..

Since the first shift on September 23, 2025:

- In 2025, the total number of police hours spent in Hospital for Mental Health Apprehensions was lower than in the previous two years;
- Between January and March 2026, the total number of police hours spend in Hospital for Mental Health Apprehensions was 40% lower than in the same months of the previous year;
- Approximately 69.7 Hospital Admission Hours have been returned back to Frontline members;
- MICR introduced itself to the Comox Valley Mental Health Community and made long lasting professional relationships with ACT, AVI (CRCL), Island Health Mental Health Departments, School District 71, North Island College, CAF 19 Wing Health Services, Probation, BC Prosecutors Service and local Judges.



Comox Valley RCMP Review cont..

The outcome of this program has surpassed our original hypothesis and objectives. Some of the benefits of MICR can be summarized as:

1. Enhanced Client Care;
2. Coordination with Partners;
3. Maximizing Resources.



Comox Valley RCMP Review cont..

Enhanced Client Care

- Follow Up;
- Advocating for Clients;
- Relationships Build Trust;
- Family Support.



Comox Valley RCMP Review cont..

Coordination with Partners

- Efficiencies with Island Health;
- Probation and Diversion from Criminal Justice System;
- Collaboration with Crown Counsel;
- Supporting Canadian Armed Forces.



Comox Valley RCMP review cont..

Maximizing Resources

- Decreased RCMP Time In Hospital;
- Assessing and Treating Clients in Community;
- Saving More Than Money.



MICR Program Needs

- We Need Your Support
 - This initiative is currently operating on in-house resources;
 - Detachment cannot support long term without backfilling;
 - Municipal funding is required;
 - One Full Time Equivalent (FTE) provides partial coverage;
 - Two Full Time Equivalents (FTE) provides full week coverage.



Letters of Support

From just 6 months of work, MICR has made a significant impact on the Community and built long lasting relations with the following partners who are requesting the Municipality consider continued funding:

- BC EHS, Glen Greenhill – Operations Manager;
- BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Steve Hulme – Senior Lead Forensic Psych Services;
- 19 Wing, Captain Sarah Siano - Primary Care Nurse;
- Comox Valley Hospital, Sarah Palmer - Emergency / ICU Manager;
- Comox Valley Hospital, Dr. Verena Langheimer – Psychiatrist and Child / Adolescent Psychiatrist;
- Island Health, Dr. Stefan Schovanek - Geriatric Psychiatrist;
- Island Health, Haley Sullivan – Community Health Social Worker;
- BC Prosecution Service, John Boccabella – Administrative Crown Counsel;
- Ministry of Children and Family Development, Kyla Talbot, Regional Director;
- Comox Valley Transition Society, Nicole Blackhouse – Connect Coordinator;
- Comox Valley Transition Society, Eric Lopatinsky – Shelter and Supportive Housing Manager;
- Comox Valley School District 71, Joe Heslip and Tara Ryan – Associate Superintendent and District Vice Principal of Inclusive Education;
- Margaret Flynn and Alicia Gibbs, Citizens;
- Sandy Lipovsky, Citizen;
- Reinhold and Esther Wilzewski, Citizens.

