



## City Council

# Olympia Fire Department CARES Program Overview

**Agenda Date:** 3/5/2024  
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### Title

Olympia Fire Department CARES Program Overview

### Recommended Action

#### Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

#### City Manager Recommendation:

Receive an overview on the Olympia Fire Department CARES Program.

### Report

#### Issue:

Whether to receive an overview of the Olympia Fire Department CARES Program.

#### Staff Contact:

Sarena Bellovich, CARES Manager, 306.709.3716

#### Presenter(s):

Sarena Bellovich, CARES Manager, 306.709.3716

### Background and Analysis:

Legislation was passed in Washington in 2017 initiating the framework for CARES programs across the State. The intention of the programs is to address important community needs through referrals, education and other assistance that might be available to improve quality of life and community outcomes.

In 2019, pilot programs began with emphasis on evidence-based practices and measurable outcomes. While there are several CARES programs in operation, there is little standardization. Each CARES program is unique to the community in which they serve based on the desired outcomes.

Medicaid reimbursement is available when a qualifying referral is made through a treat and refer framework. This framework allows for licensed EMS services to refer to the designated established CARES program for follow up services. The program is designed to reduce hospital readmissions, emphasize injury prevention, reduce overutilization of EMS for non-emergent conditions and connect

patients with appropriate community resources to service their needs.

In Olympia, OFD CARES has begun to create a more robust program as we look at the needs of our community and build a team of specialists to navigate those needs. We aim to make connections with people, letting them know that the City of Olympia Fire Department cares about their health and well-being.

**Climate Analysis:**

As we address social concerns within our city, environmental concerns will likely become a part of our conversations naturally. Keeping our community clean and safe is a large part of risk reduction and improved well-being.

**Equity Analysis:**

Everyone deserves to have access to receive sustainable tools and connection to culturally competent social service and mental health professionals. The Olympia Fire Department and OFD CARES are here to take care of people, whether they live, work, visit or play in Olympia.

CARES services are free and voluntary, without income restrictions or qualifiers. Connections to community resources, health care coordination and referrals to long-term services aim to improve quality of life and conditions, no matter where you live within the city.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

No specific community concerns are known, however access to medical care is of interest to all community members.

**Financial Impact:**

There are no financial impacts related to the briefing.

**Options:**

1. Receive the overview briefing.
2. Do not receive the overview briefing.
3. Receive the overview briefing another time.

**Attachments:**

Presentation