



Alternative Response Unit



CARDEA  HEALTH



Program Overview

- Partnership between Alameda County Fire Department, City of San Leandro, and Cardea Health
- Clinical, unarmed alternative to traditional 911 response
- Staffed by 1 EMT, 1 Nurse Practitioner, and 2 Community Health Workers
- Operates Monday–Thursday, 8:00 am–6:00 pm in San Leandro



Program Goals

- Reduce police response to 911 calls related to behavioral health requests
- Deliver an appropriate and timely response to behavioral health calls that meet the individual's needs
- Decrease the number of unnecessary emergency room visits
- Bridge and facilitate service connections for individuals



Why the ARU Exists

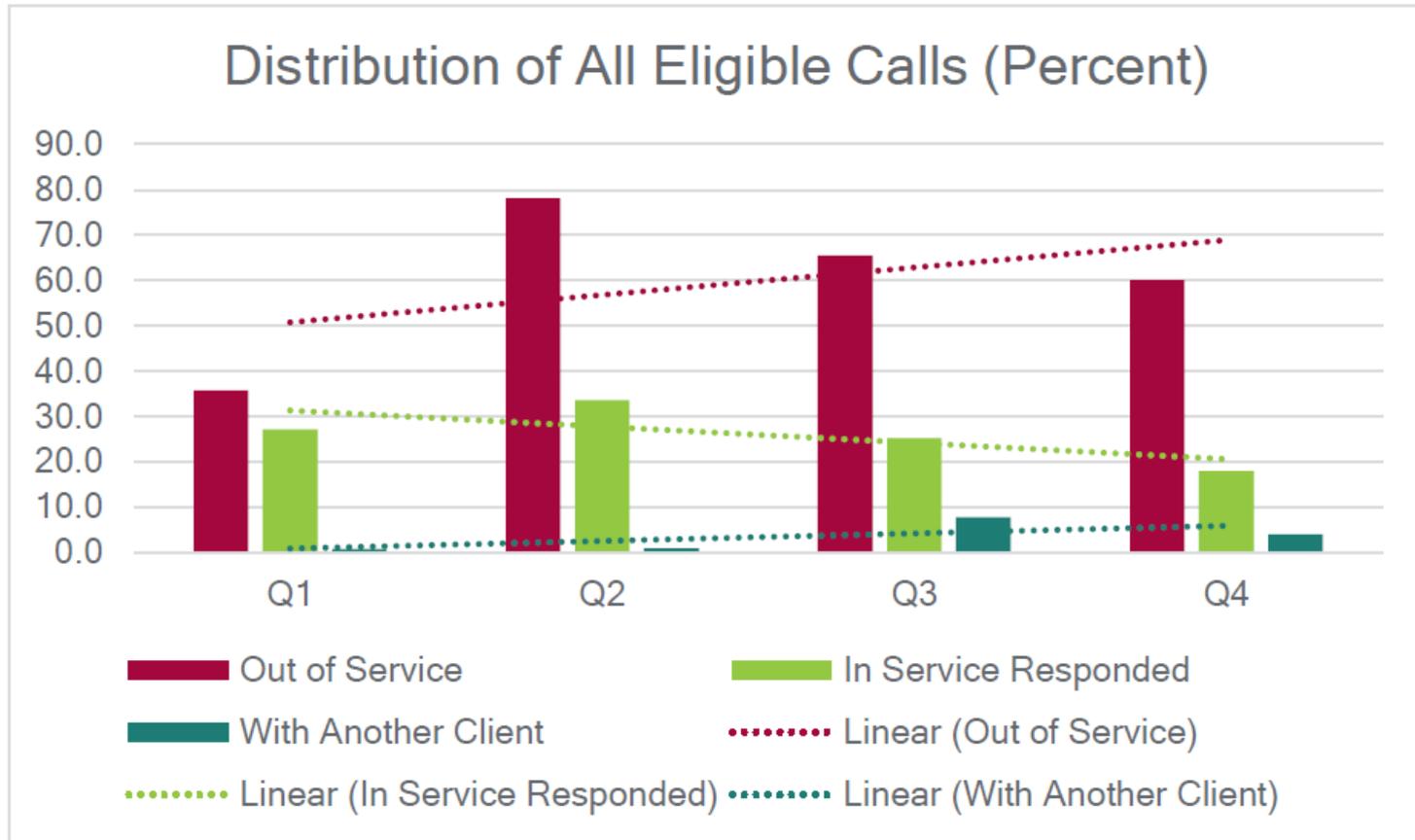
- Behavioral health crises are not always law enforcement issues
- Provides appropriate, compassionate crisis response
- Reduces strain on police, EMS, and emergency departments



First-Year Utilization Trends (Q1–Q4)

- Call volume increased then plateaued as program ramped up
- ARU is now operating at full capacity
- Dispatch triage protocols functioning as intended

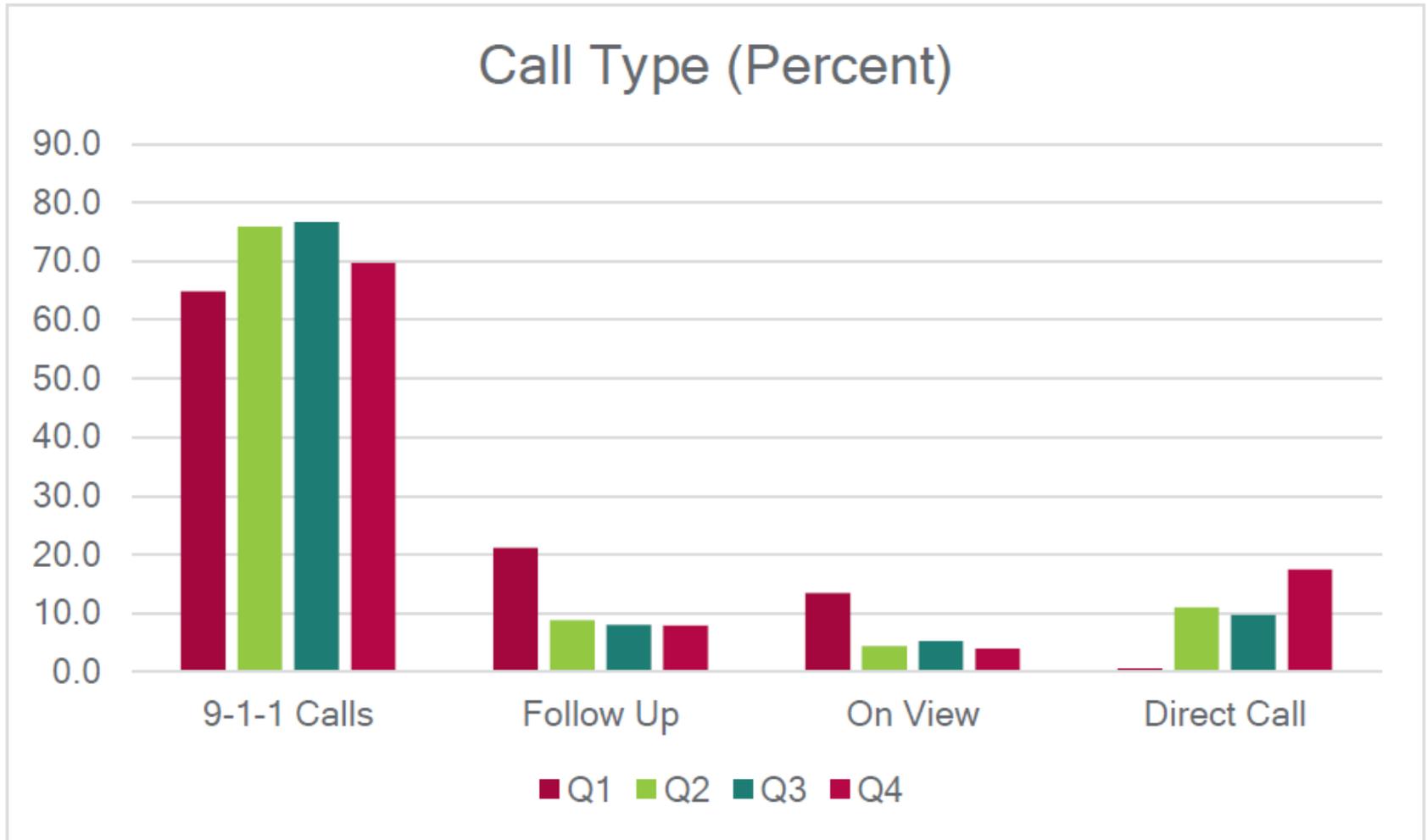
Distribution of All Eligible Calls



First-Year Impact at a Glance

- 821 unduplicated clients served
- 2,864 total client interactions
- Roughly half were high-frequency 911 callers
- Interactions with high utilizers declined over time

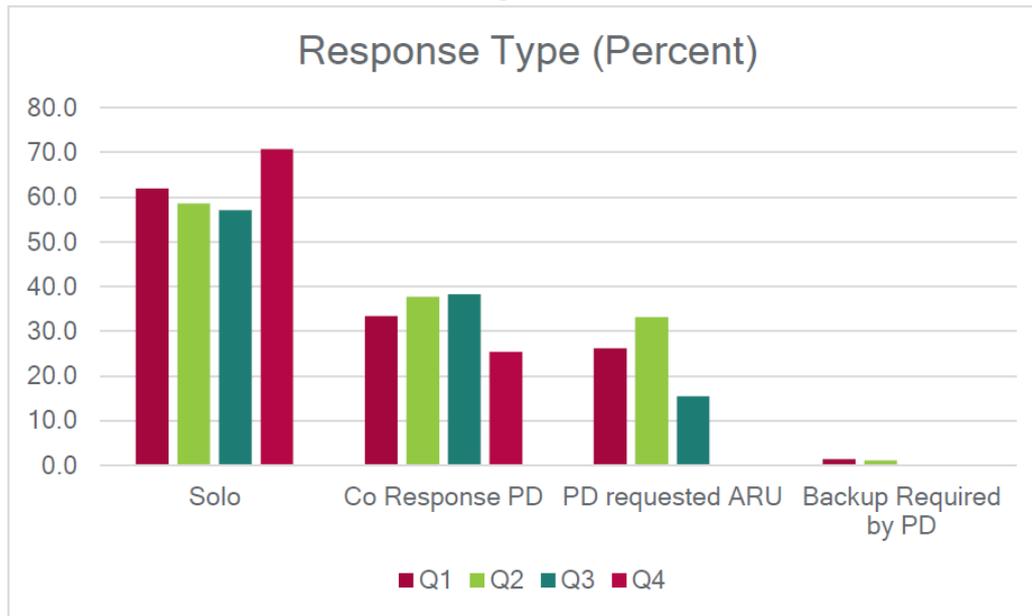
Call Type



A majority of calls received were through the 911 system. Direct Calls to the ARU increased in Q4.

Response Type

Figure 4



- 70.9% of calls handled by ARU alone
- 25.5% co-response with police
- Only ~3–4% required EMS or Fire backup
- Fully integrated into the 911 system

Emergency Department Diversion

- Only ~5% of ARU 9-1-1 calls required EMS involvement
- Most client needs met on scene or through referrals
- Helps reduce unnecessary ER utilization

Client Outcomes as a Percent of Total Calls

Client Outcomes as a Percent of Total Calls



Total Call Logs

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Unduplicated Clients	821				
Progressive Engagement Clients	90	120	87	76	
Interactions	1244	555	568	497	2864

The ARU served over 800 individuals in its first year of operation. Roughly half of them are high frequency 9-1-1 callers, which represents a total of over 2800 interactions

CARE Court Success Story – “Dana”

- Client in urgent crisis, facing eviction, serious mental health issues, history of psychiatric holds, and dangerous behavior
- ARU filed one of the first Care Court petitions on her behalf
- Worked closely with the landlord, courts, and first responders to facilitate a compassionate eviction process
- Secured safe storage for belongings and a two-week motel stay as a short-term solution
- Client developed a strong bond with ARU, refusing to be transported by anyone else
- On the final day at the motel, client caused damage and was arrested
- Care Court team acted quickly to secure a temporary conservatorship, enabling treatment at Villa Fairmont, a local mental health facility
- While in care, client stabilized and texted ARU: *“Thank you for caring enough to help even when I didn’t want it.”*
- Months later:
 - Earned a pass to attend a family baptism
 - Completed treatment and transitioned to Amber House for stable housing
 - Still in contact with ARU team

Multi-agency Success Story – “Deborah”

- Historically, client called 9-1-1 many times a day
 - Client was lonely and had worsening dementia, but adamantly refused services
 - Client’s adult children refused to assist
 - Negatively impacting Dispatchers and SLPD Officers
- Next phase included an exhaustive effort and collaboration between County EMS, Kaiser, County Adult Senior Services, SLPD Dispatch, San Leandro Human Services, ARU
- Multiple visits, consultations, meetings
- Today client is in the memory care unit of a local senior facility
- Noticeable positive impact on SLPD dispatchers and officers