**The Community Emergency Services and Support Act (CESSA)**

**HB 2784 and SB 2117**

**It’s Not a Crime to Need Mental Health Care**

**911 Must Be Able to Dispatch Health Care for Mental and Behavioral Health Emergencies**

**The Problem:**



* 10% of 911 calls request help with a mental or behavioral health emergency.
* Since Illinois lacks a coordinated health care response service, 911 can only dispatch law enforcement.
* Law enforcement practices focusing on “command and control” of a location actually makes many of these emergencies worse.
* Law enforcement skills are rarely needed as people with mental illness are less likely to be violent than people without such a diagnosis.
* Law enforcement is generally compelled to hospitalize or jail people needing this service, but 90% of people do not need such an invasive and costly response.

**The Bill:**

* Creates 911 response option separate from law enforcement for mental and behavioral health emergencies everywhere an ambulance service exists.
* Requires responders to use appropriate de-escalation techniques and then connect callers to their existing care providers or to available community services and supports.
* Saves State and local dollars by supporting people in the community rather than in emergency rooms and jails.
* Empowers each EMS Region to design regionally appropriate systems.

**This Bill Does Not Train Police**

* The bill is complementary to, but separate from, CIT training for when police are required to confront violent or unlawful activity.



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