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Kirk Vernon:

Aspects of the development of 988 is diverting calls away from 911 centers and law enforcement from people suffering from a mental health or suicidal crisis where there's no criminal or medical nexus. Having our law enforcement partners present engaged in the 988 rollout allows for them to assist us in educating our community members who can benefit most from the services provided by 988 call centers away from 911 and law enforcement when appropriate. We've all seen how someone in a mental health or suicidal crisis can be triggered farther just by the presence of law enforcement and by having 988 as an alternative, when they're not hurt, or when they're not actively engaged in a suicidal act, can give them a calming and oftentimes better outcome than by having the police show up at their residence when they're already upset.