



# News Release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Cumberland County Mental Health

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## **CIT Training Expanded to Help Telecommunicators Manage Crisis Situations**

FAYETTEVILLE – On Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 5 and 6, 34 telecommunicators from the City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County dispatch will participate in specialized Crisis Intervention Training to provide them with additional tools to effectively communicate with callers experiencing an acute psychiatric crisis.

During this intensive 16-hour CIT training, telecommunicators learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness, identify callers who may be at higher risk of harming themselves or others, and to use active listening and other risk-reduction techniques to manage these crisis situations.

CIT-trained telecommunicators are better equipped to provide responding officers with an accurate understanding of the caller's mental health issues, the nature and severity of the crisis, and other factors which could place the caller or officer at higher risk for injury.

Not only is the officer better prepared when he or she arrives on the scene, in many instances CIT-trained telecommunicators are able to significantly defuse the crisis in advance of the officer's arrival. This sets the stage for a safe and more productive encounter with law enforcement, resulting in the caller receiving appropriate mental health services rather than facing possible arrest and incarceration.

The Fayetteville-Cumberland CIT program is working toward a seamless and more comprehensive crisis response system in Cumberland County that includes a range of first responders. A cadre of CIT trained first responders is especially important in Cumberland County given the large number of returning service members with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and other mental health problems.

A second CIT training for telecommunicators is scheduled for later this month, with 21 participants already registered. Additional trainings for law enforcement, fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel are slated for January and February of 2013. CIT courses are sponsored by Fayetteville Technical Community College, which offers continuing education credits to participating law enforcement and first responders.

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