

# City of Poulsbo

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**PRESS RELEASE  
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## **CO-RESPONDER SUMMIT AT POULSBO CITY HALL APRIL 24 OVER 15 POLICE DEPARTMENTS MEET TO DISCUSS NEW APPROACH TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES**

**POULSBO, WA** - Police departments across the county are experimenting with police officer/mental health professional partnerships to enhance their response to people with behavioral health disorders. These partnerships, often called co-responder teams, are especially popular in Washington, and recent state legislation was passed (HB 2992) to fund and encourage the expansion of these programs.

The City of Poulsbo will be holding a summit on April 24 to discuss the growing popularity of the co-responder model, and emerging best practices in this area. Representatives from over fifteen departments that either have co-responder programs in place or are developing them will meet, at the event, to discuss laws, policies, and practices. Presentations will be given about suicide prevention, community partnerships, information sharing, extreme risk protection orders, and other topics relevant to these programs. More information about the event, and link to rsvp, can be found here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/co-responder-summit-tickets-7449572873>.

The City of Poulsbo, under the leadership of Mayor Becky Erickson, has operated a co-response program since 2016. Behavioral Health Navigators work with police in Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island, and Bremerton to assist individuals in crisis situations and follow up, after crisis events, to connect people to services. "This program has been terrific for the public and our officers," says Poulsbo Police Chief Dan Schoonmaker. "It has given police throughout the county direct access to a mental health professional. Police/Navigator teams connect people to care who, for whatever reason, have had trouble accessing services, and we're seeing how this kind of outreach really makes a difference." There are currently two Navigators in place, with a third expected to join the team in summer of 2018. The program is funded by Kitsap County's one tenth of one percent Treatment Tax, which is used expand chemical dependency and mental health treatment services.