



MAYOR  
**WILLIAM R. WILD**



CityofWestland.com

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Contact: [Mayorwild@cityofwestland.com](mailto:Mayorwild@cityofwestland.com)

## Westland Police Target Mental Health With New Social Worker



**Westland, Michigan (May 11, 2022)** - To ensure that Westland residents are adequately connected to needed mental health resources, the Westland Police Department has partnered Hegira Health to launch a mental health initiative led by a full time licensed master's level social worker operating out of the Department. The initiative will free up some officers to get back out on the streets to protect life and property, thus leaving in the hands of a well-trained and licensed behavioral health professional the equally important task of helping residents with mental health challenges.

Though officers are usually not trained and equipped to address mental health crisis, the Westland Police Department responded to an average of 500 mental health calls each year during the last three years. According to The Council of State Government (CSG) Justice Center, "These calls can be among the most complex and time-consuming for officers to resolve, redirecting them from addressing other public safety concerns and violent crime ... When these calls come into 911/ dispatch, the appropriate community-based resources are often lacking to make referrals, and more understanding is needed to relay accurate information to officers."

That is why this initiative announced today in the Mental Health Awareness Month of May is very crucial, and underscores the immense value the City continues to place on residents and their needs.

"With this new partnership, we now have a great way to put people in touch with a variety

of resources for needs such as substance use disorder, depression, and other concerns. We look forward to the many benefits this initiative will bring to the community and the police department," said Police Chief Jeff Jedrusik.

He recalled that in 2021, the Department partnered First Step to have an onsite victim's advocate to help victims of domestic violence. That same year, it also established the Special Victims Unit (SVU) comprising a multidisciplinary team of professionals to provide a victim-centered response to incidents of sexual assault, child abuse and domestic violence. "This nascent partnership with Hegira Health serves as the natural next step and will provide Westland Police with trained and licensed behavioral health clinicians to better assist residents," he concluded.

"Hegira Health is one of Michigan's largest freestanding integrated, behavioral healthcare organizations. It is their goal to ensure availability of quality, individualized and rapidly accessible behavioral and primary health services while being dedicated to the diversified needs of the community," noted Mayor William R. Wild. "With this formal partnership, the Westland Police Department now has a dedicated behavioral health clinician that has their own office within the police department."

**For more information, please call (734) 467-3200.**

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The City of Westland, Michigan's 10<sup>th</sup> largest city, has a population of more than 85,000 residents and is located in western Wayne County; just minutes from downtown Detroit, 2 airports, and major freeways. The City of Westland's Executive Branch is led by full-time Mayor William R. Wild, who was just re-elected to serve a four-year term in 2022. First elected in 2007, Mayor Wild is the City's longest-serving Mayor. The Legislative Branch consists of seven City Council members.