

July 8, 2025

CONTACT: Brian Van Bokkelen

Phone: 317.847.1791

Email: brian.vanbokkelen@eskenazihealth.edu

City of Indianapolis and Indianapolis EMS Announce New 911 Crosswalk to Care Program

This capability helps callers get the right care—without always going to the emergency room

Indianapolis – The City of Indianapolis and Indianapolis Emergency Medical Services (IEMS) has launched a new initiative to improve the way our community responds to non-emergency 911 medical calls. Designed to reduce strain on medical emergency services and better meet patients’ actual needs, the **Crosswalk to Care Program** introduces nurse-guided navigation to connect low-acuity callers with more appropriate care options.

“The Crosswalk to Care program is just the latest tool in our public safety toolbox to help connect Indianapolis residents to the most appropriate medical care,” said Mayor Joe Hogsett. “Not only will this new method of dispatch for Indianapolis EMS better support residents, but it will also ensure that IEMS staff can better focus their efforts on urgent, emergency situations.”

The new program addresses a growing challenge, both here locally and across the country: many 911 calls involve non-emergent issues yet still result in ambulance transport to overburdened emergency departments. This not only drives up costs but ties up critical resources. In addition to reducing pressure on EMS personnel and hospital emergency rooms, the program is expected to improve operational efficiency, reduce fuel and vehicle maintenance costs, and boost morale for first responders. Importantly, it offers patients better access, shorter wait times, and a more personalized experience, without compromising safety.

“This is a smarter way to serve the public,” said Dan O’Donnell M.D., chief of Indianapolis EMS “When someone calls 911, they need help—but not every situation requires an ambulance or an emergency department. This program gives us a better way to respond, while preserving EMS readiness for true emergencies.”

How It Works:

When a 911 call is assessed by trained emergency medical dispatchers and determined to be low-acuity (not life-threatening), it may be routed to a licensed nurse navigator for further evaluation. While the caller is still on the line, the dispatcher introduces them to the nurse, who takes over the call and guides the patient through care options tailored to their condition.

“Our 911 dispatchers work tirelessly to ensure that every caller receives the best treatment available to them,” said Tom Sellas, chief of Metropolitan Emergency Services Agency. “Being able to efficiently connect callers to a service that can spend time assessing the true needs of the moment will not only provide better service for the caller but will allow our dispatchers to respond to future calls more efficiently.”

Depending on the situation, patients may be:

- Connected with a virtual care provider or behavioral health specialist
- Directed to an urgent care center, primary care provider, or community clinic
- Given safe self-care instructions for managing symptoms at home
- Scheduled for follow-up with dental, OB/GYN, or public health resources
- Offered transportation through local options if needed
- Escalated to ambulance response if deemed medically necessary after nurse review

Every non-emergency caller receives a follow-up within 24 hours to check on their health, ensure they accessed care, and provide additional support if needed.

The Crosswalk to Care nurse navigation process went live in Marion County on June 16 and has already serviced approximately 200 callers, connecting them to a variety of resources.

Media availabilities can be coordinated through Brian Van Bokkelen.

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Indianapolis EMS is the largest provider of emergency pre-hospital medical care in the state, responding to more than 130,000 911 calls each year. As a partnership between the City of Indianapolis, Indiana University School of Medicine, and Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County, with Eskenazi Health as the supervising health system, **IEMS** strives to provide the best pre-hospital medical services to the community through the endless pursuit of excellence in patient-centered care, education, efficiency, efficacy, safety, and quality of service.

To learn more about **IEMS**, visit www.IndianapolisEMS.org. You can also follow IEMS on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/IndianapolisEMS>), Twitter/X (<http://twitter.com/IndianapolisEMS>) and Instagram (<http://instagram.com/IndianapolisEMS>).