



**Bexar County Public Information Office**  
San Antonio, Texas 78205-3036

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 8, 2022**

**Contact:** Tom Peine  
210.335.0073/o  
210.420.8694/m

**Bexar County's Mental Health Response Team  
Receives AACOG Award**

Yesterday, the specialized mental health response team operating in unincorporated Bexar County and its 26 suburban cities received the "Government Project of the Year" award from the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG). The team is commonly known by its acronym S.M.A.R.T., which stands for Standardized Multidisciplinary Alternate Response Team.

Speakers at the ceremony noted the continued need for mental health resources. The initiative taken by the Bexar County Commissioners Court in 2020 was recognized as a model for other counties. Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff, who was instrumental in getting the team installed, stated, "We owe our residents a quality mental health response. Putting someone in jail when they are experiencing a mental health crisis does not help them. S.M.A.R.T. changed that. Today, we offer comprehensive services so people can get the help that they need."

Bexar County together with its partners the Bexar County Sheriff's Office, the Center for Health Care Services, Acadian Ambulance Service, and the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council, designed a model for mental health first response for individuals who experience a crisis, paired with a follow-up program. 80 % of S.M.A.R.T. clients had not been connected with resources prior to the team's response. Since its inception in 2020, there have been no incidents of excessive use of force during calls where the team was involved. The intent is to avoid incarceration of individuals who experience a mental health emergency. Instead, clients will be connected to appropriate resources to help them not only in the moment, but stabilize them long-term.

Bexar County Office of Criminal Justice Director Mike Lozito said, "This is fantastic! I am very happy for the members of the team who work so passionately in this field. And I am happy for our partners to receive recognition for putting together this nationally recognized model."

More information about S.M.A.R.T. can be found on their website at <https://www.bexar.org/SMART>. In an emergency, the team will be dispatched from information gathered during a 9-1-1 call. Otherwise, they can be requested for a mental health response via the non-emergency number (210) 335-6000.

###



**AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments

**AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments

**AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments **AACOG** Alamo Area Council of Governments

