

Better NB

Case Studies of City Initiatives
Making New Braunfels a
Better Community

A Model of Innovation: New Braunfels' Mobile Integrated Health Program



Municipal Excellence Award by the Texas Municipal League (TML)

The City of New Braunfels' Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program is now a recognized leader in public health and safety innovation across the state of Texas. New Braunfels' MIH program was recently honored with a Municipal Excellence Award by the Texas Municipal League (TML), recognizing the city's achievement in advancing innovation and operational excellence within municipal government. Each year, TML honors cities across the state that demonstrate exemplary performance in innovation, problem-solving, effective management, community engagement, and elevated service delivery.

The recognition of New Braunfels' MIH program reflects the City's strategic commitment to improving public health and safety outcomes through collaborative, data-driven, and cost-effective solutions. By addressing critical gaps in emergency response, community health, and preventive care, the MIH program represents a transformative shift in how cities can proactively manage the wellbeing of residents and exemplifies how mid-sized cities like New Braunfels can implement creative solutions that deliver measurable improvements in service, efficiency, and quality of life.

Like many cities, New Braunfels faced rising demands on emergency medical services (EMS) and fire departments. A significant number of 911 calls were non-emergency in nature, involving individuals who needed care, but not necessarily a trip to the emergency room. This created a cycle of overburdened first responders, unnecessary hospital visits, and rising healthcare costs. The City recognized that traditional emergency response models were not sufficient to meet these challenges. What was needed was an approach that could integrate public safety and healthcare resources, with a focus on prevention and connecting residents to the right level of care. The MIH program was born out of this vision, with the City launching the program and the McKenna Foundation supporting the effort by contributing to first-year operating expenses and capital investments, including an MIH Specialist vehicle, an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), and various computer and technology equipment.

Primary Goals of MIH

- **Reduce preventable 911 calls and hospital readmissions:** By intervening early and connecting patients to appropriate services, the program aims to reduce strain on emergency systems and first responders.
- **Provide patient-centered care:** The MIH team emphasizes treating individuals holistically by addressing not just medical emergencies but also social and behavioral health needs.
- **Foster collaboration:** Success requires strong partnerships among city departments, healthcare providers, and community organizations.

The impact of the MIH program has been wide-reaching. For residents, especially vulnerable populations such as seniors and those with chronic health conditions, this program provides an invaluable safety net. Patients receive follow-up visits, education about managing their conditions, and connections to resources ranging from primary care providers to social services.

Meanwhile, first responders also benefit. With fewer non-emergency calls diverting their attention, fire and EMS personnel can focus on true emergencies, improving response times and outcomes. Furthermore, local hospitals and clinics see reduced readmissions and overcrowding in emergency rooms, saving both money and medical resources.

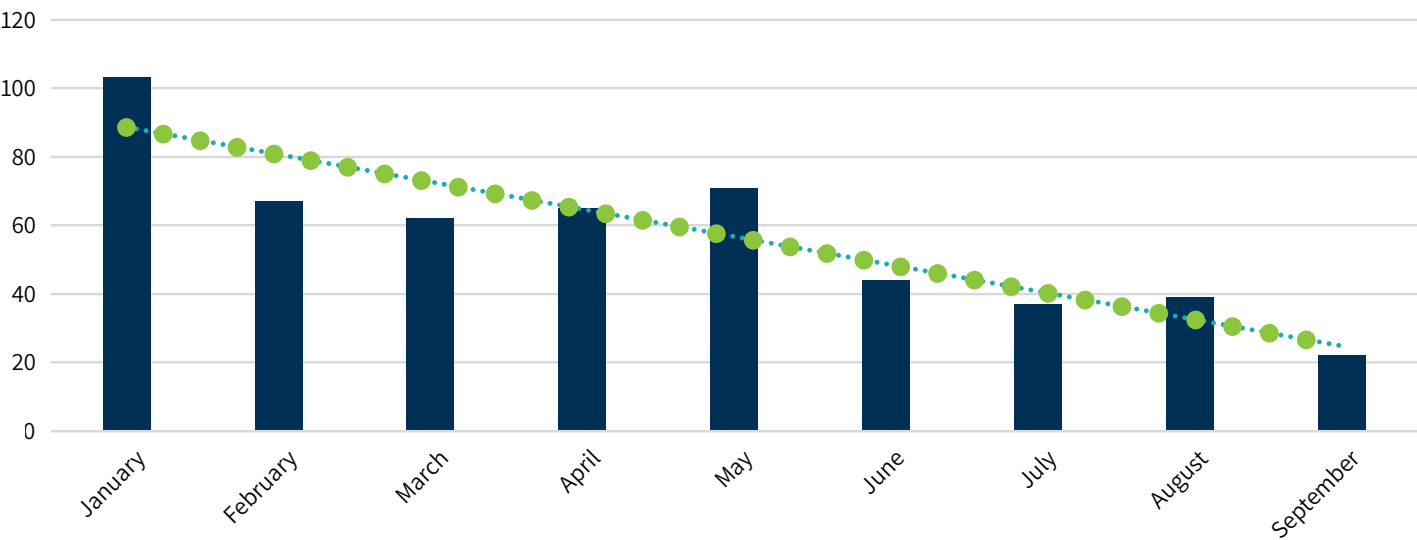
“This project was made possible through the vision of EMS Chief Michael Hayes, the decisive action of our MIH Specialist Ashley Cammack, and the unwavering support of our elected officials and City leadership. Their collective commitment brought this initiative to life,” said New Braunfels Fire Chief Ruy Lozano.



MIH Specialist Ashley Cammack

One of the key performance metrics used to evaluate the MIH program is call reduction. This is calculated by comparing the average number of 911 calls made by a patient cohort over consecutive six-month periods and then annualizing the difference to estimate total impact. For the 2024 cohort of 59 patients, this analysis revealed an estimated reduction of approximately 79% in calls for service from that group.

FY24 Cohort Calls for Service 2025



From a fiscal standpoint, the combined reduction in emergency responses for the 2024 and projected 2025 cohorts translates to over \$500,000 in savings for the fire department and the broader healthcare system. These savings reflect not only reduced operational strain on emergency services but also the long-term value of investing in proactive, community-based healthcare models like MIH.

The New Braunfels Fire Department MIH program has achieved remarkable results across several key areas so far.

Cost Savings	Improved Quality of Care	Collaboration Across Agencies	Recognition of Innovation
By reducing unnecessary ER visits and hospitalizations, and cutting hundreds of emergency calls annually, the program has saved the city and its healthcare partners more than \$500,000 funds that can be reinvested into improving community health services.	Residents report better health outcomes and greater satisfaction with their care. The program's emphasis on patient education empowers individuals to manage their health more effectively.	The MIH program has fostered unprecedented cooperation among city departments, county agencies, and healthcare providers. This integrated approach ensures no resident falls through the cracks.	Being highlighted in the TML Municipal Excellence Awards underscores the program's statewide reputation as a model of innovation in public safety.

While data-driven results show measurable success, the true impact is best understood through the stories of individuals. Patients with repeated 911 calls due to unmanaged chronic conditions now receive home visits where paramedics help them navigate medication, nutrition, and follow-up care. Seniors living alone benefit from regular wellness checks that catch potential issues before they escalate into emergencies. These personal successes ripple outward, strengthening the health and safety of the entire community.

From an operational standpoint, the MIH program also represents a high return on investment. Preventing just a handful of unnecessary hospital admissions offsets the cost of staffing and training the MIH team. Additionally, the program saves time for first responders who can now direct their expertise to true emergencies. This dual benefit—cost efficiency and improved service—makes the MIH program a model that other municipalities are eager to replicate.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to provide our paramedics and firefighters, who do incredible work day-in and day-out, with one more tool for their tool belt," said MIH Specialist Ashely Cammack. "The MIH program gives those first responders the ability to refer patients they know are ready for help directly into our program. It's a powerful step in bridging care for those who need it most. One of the biggest challenges for this program is, even when help is offered, patients still have the right to make their own choices. Despite this, our paramedics and firefighters continue to show up with respect, compassion, and a high level of clinical knowledge, no matter the situation."

The long-term vision for the MIH program is equally promising. New Braunfels continues to expand the scope of services offered, exploring partnerships with mental health providers, expanding chronic disease management efforts, and enhancing technology-driven patient monitoring. The City anticipates that as the program grows, it will continue to strengthen public health infrastructure, reduce costs, and improve the overall livability of the community.

The Mobile Integrated Health program in New Braunfels exemplifies how cities can creatively address the evolving demands of public safety and healthcare. By combining innovation, collaboration, and a strong commitment to residents, the program has delivered measurable benefits for individuals and the community. As cities nationwide seek ways to improve health outcomes while managing limited resources, the New Braunfels MIH program demonstrates that with vision and commitment, real progress is possible. It's more than just a program - it's a promise to residents that their city is committed to their wellbeing, safety, and quality of life.

