Minneapolis working on PD database to monitor officer wellness, behavior patterns that may lead to misconduct

City officials have selected an analytics firm to monitor information such as overtime, patterns of calling in sick, arrest records and off-duty work in search of outliers

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Photo/Minneapolis Police Department

By Dave Orrick

Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS — Minneapolis leaders on Monday announced they had selected a company to build a database designed to flag problems with police officers — before they become problematic.

The idea is a technological approach — an "early intervention system" — to both support officers in need of say, mental health services, while also preventing cops with patterns of potential misconduct from ascending the ranks unchecked.

The latter was arguably the case for former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, who had [pressed his knee against the necks of at least two men](#) before he did the same maneuver to George Floyd in 2020. Floyd's murder by Chauvin was the impetus for state and federal legal interventions that will lead to years of court-approved police oversight. City officials see an early intervention system as satisfying one of a litany of changes mandated by those legal cases.

"People say all the time, 'How could they not know that this officer would do that?'" Police Chief Brian O'Hara said at a news conference Monday. "This is the answer to that."

On Monday, Mayor Jacob Frey, O'Hara and other officials announced that after a national bidding process, they had selected Benchmark Analytics, a Chicago-based firm that includes researchers at the University of Chicago and has implemented similar systems in several other major cities, to build the Minneapolis system.

"It is not going to solve all our problems," O'Hara said. He emphasized that the system "is not discipline" but rather an "early-warning system" that can identify potential concerns for officers that go beyond traditional complaints around misconduct.

O'Hara said the database will analyze information — such as overtime, patterns of calling in sick, arrest records and off-duty work — in search of outliers. The program can assist supervisors, who can intervene in an attempt to "correct officers' behavior" before actual problems arise, he said.

Nick Barkley, a civilian member of a team implementing the program, said officer wellness was an essential part of it. "Happy, healthy humans produce the best work," he said.

The five-year contract for $2.375 million needs approval from the City Council , which could take up the measure as soon as Thursday.

The money would be paid in part by a $500,000 grant from the Pohlad Foundation . The rest of the funding would come from general fund spending from the city's police and information technology budgets.