

Through our partnership with the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance, officer wellness was identified as one of the primary goals of the department's strategic plan. The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services' Law Enforcement Best Practices guide, and the President's Task Force report on 21st Century Policing, also include officer wellness and safety as major pillars. For 2020, we are working on enhancing the employee wellness program as follows:

- Resource guide for employees and families.
- Educate officer's about available resources.
- Develop an early intervention system.
- Enhance chaplain program.
- Obtain employee input.

Wellness Program

Officers need to remain fit for duty and able to perform their job. The wellness program enhances the department's and our community's expectation that our police officers are both physically and mentally fit, providing extraordinary protection and superior service. They are required to be free from any physical, emotional or mental condition that might adversely affect their duties. They must pass a state written licensing exam, extensive background investigation, physical exam, fitness exam, and psychological exam administered by a licensed Psychologist.

We have also established a local clergy member that provides confidential part-time chaplaincy services to personnel (separate from the Chaplain Program that utilizes resources from Ramsey and Hennepin Counties for the community). The internal chaplain pays informal visits and attends Roll Calls to be available for our staff on an ongoing basis.

Check Up for the Neck Up

This confidential in-house and mandatory program provides employees access to qualified mental health professional contracted by our agency. Employees will receive educational support, resources and individualized counseling, as needed.

The consultant will be asked to provide support and services to personnel following a critical incident. The check-up is designed to be a simple meeting for staff to become acquainted with a potential resource should they encounter a need or crisis. Individuals may elect to engage in conversation or receive a counseling referral, or talk about topics on a more superficial level. This is a natural progression from the community case worker program implemented in 2019 that connects community members with mental health and other services.

Mental health training, professional development

We are implementing Use of Force and mental health training programs that utilize principles contained in the Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (I.C.A.T.) program. I.C.A.T

offers annual and mandatory training by certified staff that provide first-responding officers with tools, skills, and options to increase the likelihood of a successful and safe diffusion during a wide-range of critical incidents. The training ensures our police officers receive the mandated 16 hours of continuing education credits on an every three-year licensing cycle, as required by Minn. Stat. 626.8469:

- Crisis intervention.
- Mental health crises.
- Conflict management and mediation.
- Recognizing, valuing community diversity and cultural differences.
- Recognizing potential implicit bias.

Officer's will earn 28-30 hours of continuing education (over three-years), nearly doubling what is required by MN Peace Officer Standards and Training.

We will continue to provide the best care and resources for our most important department asset - our personnel. Action steps are being taken to further our goals of increasing community partnerships and inclusion, enhancing professional development, strengthening employee wellness, and accountability.