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Wolf Administration Rolls Out New Mental Wellness Resources for Firefighters and EMS Personnel

Harrisburg, PA – State Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego today announced the launch of several new online resources designed to provide mental wellness resources for fire, rescue and emergency medical services personnel across the commonwealth this week.

“More and more of our first responders are affected by the invisible wounds of traumatic experiences they have been through as part of their jobs,” said Commissioner Trego. “Some time ago, many in our profession were hesitant to seek professional help to achieve mental wellness for a variety of reasons. We now know the potentially devastating effects of this hesitation. Governor Wolf has made addressing mental health needs a priority in the state with his Reach Out PA: Your Mental Health Matters campaign.”

“As a result of these circumstances and initiatives, our office wants to provide access to training and other important resources to achieve mental wellness, especially amid a global pandemic.”

Historically, medical and physical fitness has taken precedence over mental wellness in the fire service. Left unaddressed, mental and behavioral stress can interfere with day-to-day life, affecting work, sleep, and relationships. Ultimately, stressors can result in diagnosable mental illnesses, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); depression; anxiety and substance use disorders.

Unfortunately, the most serious consequence of untreated behavioral health problems is the risk of suicide. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a 2015 study found that over the course of their careers, a troubling number of fire fighters experience suicidal thoughts (46%), make suicide plans (19%) and attempt suicide (15.5%).

“Continuing to ignore the mental health of first responders is simply not an option,” Trego added. “The costs are too great.”

Four courses are now available at no cost to PA fire and EMS personnel through an [online training portal \(TRAIN PA\)Opens In A New Window](#). Users are required to register for a Train PA account. Courses cover a variety of topics and are titled, “Being a First Responder During a Global Pandemic,” “Had a Bad Call,” “How to Better Support Your Fellow First Responders,” and “Capturing the Load.”

For additional information on other training and grant opportunities relevant to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, visit the [OSFC website](#).

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