

AG Kaul: Recognizes National Suicide Prevention Month

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MADISON, Wis. – As National Suicide Prevention Month comes to an end, Attorney General Josh Kaul is urging those who are struggling with mental health challenges to seek support from people and resources around them.

“Law enforcement officers encounter difficult—and sometimes tragic—circumstances. We must continue working to de-stigmatize mental health issues and to increase the availability of peer support and other programs that promote officer wellness,” said Attorney General Kaul.

To date in 2019, there have been at least 163 officer suicides in the United States, according to Blue H.E.L.P., a non-profit organization that tracks law enforcement suicides[1]. This number represents suicides that have been reported. There are likely many more officer suicides that go unreported. It is estimated that twice as many law enforcement officers every year die by suicide than are killed in either traffic accidents or assaults.

At trainings provided by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, wellness training has been incorporated for all new chiefs, sheriffs, and jail administrators in a one week in-person orientation training program. Wellness is included in all DOJ-sponsored leadership training seminars and conferences for the law enforcement community.

DOJ is also increasing peer support training for law enforcement. In June 2019, DOJ sponsored its first three-day regional peer support team training event in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Beginning in 2016, academy students now complete training on wellness and suicide prevention. They are trained on the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

program. QPR training focuses on identifying the signs and symptoms of someone in crisis; knowing how to ask someone if they are thinking about committing suicide; persuading a suicidal person to get help; and referring a suicidal person to resources that can help.

In addition to the wellness training incorporated at the academy level, in April 2019, the Wisconsin Department of Justice funded a QPR train-the-trainer course to develop additional QPR instructors who can provide QPR training at the academy level and beyond.