



## Council Agenda Form

<b>MOTION #</b>		<b>DRAFT #</b>
<b>DATE SUBMITTED:</b> 2/3/2021	<b>DATE TO GO BEFORE COUNCIL:</b>	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Daniel Peabody		
<b>CO-SPONSORS:</b> N/A		
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Legislative		

### TITLE OF MOTION: HCPD Mental Wellness Check-In Program

#### RECOMMENDATION:

I move that the city's FY22 budget include an expenditure of up to \$50,000 to support a universal quarterly mental health check-in program for officers and dispatchers.

#### SUMMARY BACKGROUND:

The mental wellness of the officers and dispatchers of the Hyattsville City Police Department is of great importance to our community. HCPD officers and dispatchers must regularly make reasonable, safe, community-minded and culturally sensitive decisions in the midst of emotionally charged and potentially dangerous situations. In order for these professionals to protect the safety and wellbeing of our residents, we must ensure that people in these important and powerful positions are emotionally well and mentally healthy.

The Mental Wellness Check-In Program is one component of a larger, overarching proposed HCPD Mental Health Program developed by the Department's Media Relations/Mental Health Programs Manager. With a projected start date in mid-February, the robust calendar of required and optional training and educational opportunities for officers and dispatchers begins with Mental Illness 101 and continues with, among other topics, autism awareness, Mental Health First Aid, and Crisis Intervention Team training. Twice-weekly meditation and wellness sessions are also in the proposed program.

FY 21/22 launches the first full year of programming, with most of the training and educational opportunities provided for free by local subject matter experts. A December survey created by the Mental Health Programs Manager revealed the need for some programming that requires funding from the City.

Ten out of 12 dispatchers and 34 of the approximately 43 officers at HCPD completed the 14-question mental health survey. Key indicators regarding the need and desire for additional mental health training and support services were evident from the responses to several questions. Eighty-six percent of the participants said they feel it is their responsibility to report their concern if they thought a colleague might need mental health support, but 52% said they do not feel they have a way to do so without causing that colleague professional harm.

When asked if they thought it would be a positive or a negative if HCPD began requiring every officer and dispatcher to meet with a talk therapist once a quarter for a mental wellness check-in, 61% said they thought it was a positive idea and 21% said it did not matter to them either way. Even without program details, only eight of the 44 participants said they saw it as a negative. In response to these and other survey answers, we are proposing the HCPD Mental Wellness Check-In Program.

Required for all HCPD officers and dispatchers, this program is designed to remove the stigma of *choosing* to see a therapist and guarantees HCPD personnel receive mental health support for free. The one-on-one, quarterly virtual meetings will be with contracted, racially diverse, licensed clinical psychologists who preferably have experience working with law enforcement personnel. *This Mental Wellness Check-in Program would not be used for fitness-for-duty assessments.* These confidential, 50-minute sessions would include clinical and psycho-educational coaching, and when needed, talk therapy. Discussions would only be reported if someone is deemed a danger to themselves or to others. If warranted, program psychologists will provide officers with vetted lists of mental health practitioners available through the City's health insurance plans, and would follow-up to ensure the

officer or dispatcher has made an appointment with a local practitioner. The quarterly check-in sessions would take place in September and December 2021, and March and June 2022.

Funding this component of the larger HCPD Mental Health Program will demonstrate the Hyattsville City Council hears and is responding to one of the most significant needs in our community today. This program directly supports the mental health of the city's first responders and creates a ripple effect that positively impacts their families and helps officers and dispatchers best engage residents in a positive way that boosts community mental wellness overall.

**ANTICIPATED STAFF RESOURCES REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT:**

All activities to be coordinated by the HCPD Media Relations/Mental Health Programs Manager.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Inclusion in the FY22 budget for the City of Hyattsville.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR / DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR COMMENT:**

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:**

HCPD Mental Health Program Proposal Presentation

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

\$50,000

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

N/A

**STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIONS:**

Goal 3 - Promote a Safe and Vibrant Community

**LEGAL REVIEW REQUIRED?:**

N/A