

RESOLUTION NO. .

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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RESOLUTION AFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL FIRST RESPONDERS

WHEREAS, first responders, including firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and paramedics, play a vital role in safeguarding the health and safety of our community; and

WHEREAS, first responders regularly encounter high-stress situations, trauma, and critical incidents that can adversely affect their mental health and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that first responders experience disproportionate rates of mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, which can lead to decreased job performance, increased absenteeism, and a higher risk of suicide; and

WHEREAS, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation reports that first responders are significantly more likely to suffer from mental health challenges than the general population, with up to 37% experiencing PTSD symptoms, a concerning statistic that emphasizes the urgency of addressing their mental health needs; and

WHEREAS, the demanding nature of first responder roles often leads to overworking, long shifts, and insufficient time for recovery, contributing to burnout and mental exhaustion, which further exacerbate mental health struggles; and

WHEREAS, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), approximately 30% of first responders develop behavioral health conditions such as depression and PTSD, compared to 20% of the general population, highlighting the unique pressures faced by this group; and

WHEREAS, a 2018 survey conducted by the University of Phoenix found that 85% of first responders had experienced mental health symptoms related to their work, with over half reporting that they did not feel comfortable discussing these concerns with supervisors due to stigma or fear of repercussions; and

WHEREAS, a survey conducted by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) found that nearly 20% of firefighters and paramedics have had thoughts of suicide, further illustrating the critical need for accessible and confidential mental health resources for first responders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County affirms the importance of focusing on the mental health and well-being of all first responders and advocates for policies and practices that prioritize mental health resources and support systems.

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