

2018 Destination Zero Executive Summary

With the alarming trend of mental health, diabetes, obesity, and other health concerns related specifically to first responders nationwide, Prince William County sought to provide employees with the tools necessary to recognize, combat, and ultimately prevent these wellness-related issues. In response to several difficult years within the Police Department, as well as the Department of Fire and Rescue, the Police Department's Wellness & Resiliency Unit was established in 2016 and given a mission to assist employees in maintaining and/or improving their overall wellness by providing a multi-faceted approach that offers educational opportunities, peer fitness support groups, and a variety of other tools.

Prior to the implementation of the Wellness & Resiliency Unit, the Police Department began coordination of a county-wide Health and Wellness Fair in conjunction with other County agencies. The goal was to move toward a culture of awareness of healthy lifestyles in the workplace by providing educational opportunities, hands-on experiences, and small group presentations to address a large array of health and wellness-related topics for all employees. This annual Wellness Fair is now in its' 5th year and continues to grow.

Continuing in this forward-thinking trend, the County recognized the importance of providing public safety staff with easily-accessible, quality mental health care in a way that both protected confidentiality of staff while also providing strong opportunities for rapport-building and law enforcement cultural awareness by the mental health provider. The Police Department, in partnership with the County's Department of Fire and Rescue, Public Safety Communications, and Community Services developed an idea for a Public Safety Resilience Program. The program is a stand-alone unit within the County government. While the County does have an established Employee Assistance Program, this PSRP is offered in conjunction with the EAP services. This idea was implemented by the County in September of 2016. The Public Safety Resilience Center is now staffed by 1 Director and 3 Behavioral Therapists, each assigned to work with a specific department, but all cross-trained, as well. Along with providing counseling for staff, the therapists also offer oracular acupuncture to employees as another tool for stress management. Not only does staff have access to these services, the Public Safety Resilience Center also offers unlimited therapy sessions free of charge to immediate family members of employees, as the Police Department, Department of Fire and Rescue, and Public Safety Communications wished to better provide support to the employee's main support system.

As the County and the Department have a goal of focusing on opportunities that are inclusive of all aspects of wellness, the Wellness & Resiliency Unit is also responsible for overseeing a robust volunteer Chaplain Program, the Department's Peer Support Team, the Total Money Makeover group, the Peer Fitness Advisor Team, and the Athletic Training/Work Hardening Program. All of these together have the tools to address a variety of wellness-related issues for staff including spiritual, social, financial, and physical wellness.