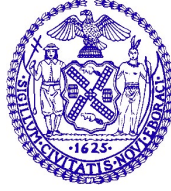




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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2019**

**DOI'S OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR THE NYPD AND NYPD JOINTLY ANNOUNCE  
IMPROVEMENTS TO NYPD'S POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND TRAINING ON OFFICER WELLNESS AND SAFETY  
—NYPD enacting all reforms suggested by OIG-NYPD—**

The Department of Investigation's ("DOI") Office of the Inspector General for the New York City Police Department ("OIG-NYPD") and the NYPD jointly announce improvements to policies, practices and training on officer wellness and safety. These improvements, in line with recommendations made by an OIG-NYPD investigation, and accepted by NYPD, are detailed in a Report issued today by the OIG-NYPD and in the Response Letter issued today by NYPD. A copy of OIG-NYPD's Report and NYPD's Response are attached and can be found on DOI's website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doi/newsroom/public-reports.page> A copy of NYPD's Response can be found on NYPD's website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/index.page>.

NYPD and OIG-NYPD agree that officer wellness and safety is a critical issue. In 2019 alone, nine NYPD uniformed personnel have died by suicide. OIG-NYPD's review found that NYPD leadership takes these issues seriously and is addressing them, as evidenced by recent improvements and an ongoing commitment to strengthen policies and training in this area. NYPD currently provides a network of services to current and former NYPD members and the Department is collaborating with City and private sector entities, including OIG-NYPD, to ensure that these services continue to improve.

NYPD officers have a range of internal and external support services at their disposal, although these services are underutilized by uniformed personnel as a result of the stigma surrounding mental health issues and treatment, according to an OIG-NYPD survey of retired officers. Based in part on the facts uncovered by OIG-NYPD's investigation, the agencies agree on a number of changes to improve access to mental health services and to encourage officers to feel comfortable seeking help. One area of agreement is the need for expanded training, beyond what has been available for the last several years. Within the last month, NYPD provided health and wellness training to executives, and command level training is underway. Finally, as per the OIG-NYPD recommendation, NYPD is exploring thoughtful ways to use data that can help identify at-risk officers (e.g., information regarding officers involved in domestic incidents, etc.) for early intervention, while protecting officer privacy.

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill said, "NYPD officers are dedicated to fighting crime and keeping all New Yorkers safe. And, as an organization, we are dedicated to ensuring that every member of the service is supported in seeking help whenever it is needed. Everyone must be comfortable accessing any of the many available resources, and should understand that asking for help is never a sign of weakness – in fact, it is a sign of great strength. We thank the staff of the OIG-NYPD for their research and recommendations, and are encouraged that the NYPD reforms are on the right track."

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, "DOI stands together with the NYPD in recognizing that mental health wellness is a vitally important matter that takes regular education and outreach, and the creation of a compassionate, supportive, and open environment for officers to seek assistance. No police officer should be left to struggle alone. DOI and NYPD are committed to work together to successfully address this issue and I thank Police Commissioner O'Neill and his staff who are dedicated to improving these crucial services."

Inspector General Philip K. Eure said, "NYPD is facing a crisis, and the wellness of officers impacts the safety of the public. By hearing directly from retired officers and reviewing NYPD's current policies and practices, we have sought to highlight where NYPD is doing well and where they can do better."

Police officers are highly susceptible to stress, trauma, and fatigue given the nature of their work, and such factors can impact their wellness. OIG-NYPD's review sought to understand the effectiveness and use of NYPD's current mental health resources by issuing an anonymous survey to all uniformed personnel who retired in 2016. Findings include:

- 25% of survey respondents, 44 out of 174, reported experiencing at least one period of emotional stress, trauma, or substance abuse during their careers that caused them to consider getting support services from a licensed professional, yet only two thirds of these respondents reported seeking assistance.
- 50% of respondents, 22 out of 44, who considered getting professional support also expressed fear that the Department would find out about their decision to seek support services.

OIG-NYPD and NYPD agree that there is a need to continue to strengthen the Department's support services and create a culture that encourages officers to use these programs. As part of NYPD's ongoing efforts to address the mental health issues in the ranks, the Department has circulated pamphlets, posters, videos, and other messages detailing existing and new services and encouraging officers to seek help. NYPD has also rolled out additional efforts in recent months, including creating a Health and Wellness Task Force, establishing a Health and Wellness Section, which will provide vital resources and relevant trainings to enhance members' overall physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and identifying several short-term and long-term reforms to address officer suicides. In addition, NYPD has accepted each of OIG-NYPD's 12 recommendations, and has already implemented some of them or is in the process of doing so.

The recommendations include:

- Develop an overarching Mental Health and Wellness policy that articulates goals, establishes standards, and outlines relevant programs and resources. This policy would encompass the recommendations in this Report, the work of the Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator, and the efforts of the Mental Health and Wellness Task Force and Health and Wellness Section.
- Increase the staffing level in the Health and Wellness Section to include full-time licensed mental health professionals and support staff with appropriate levels of competency in the areas of mental health and wellness.
- Study the feasibility of establishing mandatory periodic mental health checks for all police officers or certain categories of at-risk officers.
- Retain outside mental health experts to review and audit the current range of Department-wide health and wellness trainings that NYPD is providing to personnel and ask these experts to make recommendations to NYPD on what additional training, if any, should be developed and delivered.

- Modify early intervention — Risk Assessment Information Liability System (RAILS) — to include an “officer wellness” category, based on various relevant indicators, so that NYPD personnel requiring officer wellness intervention can be identified. For example, while NYPD’s Internal Affairs Bureau has data about officers involved in personal domestic incidents or alcohol-related offenses, the Department does not actively review this information or feed such data into RAILS in order to identify at-risk officers who may benefit from intervention.
- Establish a mandatory transitional training program for officers approaching retirement, which would provide helpful information on the availability of support services, adjusting to life as a member of the public, financial advisement, and medical and retirement benefits. In addition, NYPD should allow retirees to make use of Departmental support services for a reasonable period of time after retirement or separation.

The OIG-NYPD Report was prepared by DOI’s Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD, specifically Assistant Inspector General Patrick Cahill; Policy Analyst Betty Diop; Senior Policy Analyst Justyn Richardson; Confidential Investigator Justin Ramos; Policy Analyst Tatiana Hastings; and Investigative Attorney Jaclyn Quiles, under the supervision of First Deputy Inspector General Asim Rehman and Inspector General Philip K. Eure.

DOI thanks the five police unions for their assistance in the development of the survey used in the Report.

NYPD’s Response Letter was prepared by Jeffrey Schlanger, NYPD Deputy Commissioner, Risk Management Bureau.

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