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Int. No. 832

By Council Members Nurse, Maloney, Louis, Schulman and the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams)

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the fire department to provide mental health support services to emergency responders

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of title 15 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 15-155 to read as follows:

§ 15-155 Mental health support services. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Emergency dispatchers. The term “emergency dispatchers” means department personnel who answer 911 calls and dispatch department personnel to emergency incidents, or who supervise such personnel.

Emergency medical service personnel. The term "emergency medical service personnel" means personnel assigned to the department’s bureau of emergency medical services who routinely deliver emergency medical services, or who supervise such personnel.

Emergency responders. The term “emergency responders” means all personnel who participate in emergency operations conducted by the department, including, but not limited to, fire operations personnel, emergency medical service personnel, and emergency dispatchers.

Fire operations personnel. The term “fire operations personnel” means personnel assigned to the department’s bureau of fire operations, including special operations command, who routinely respond to emergency incidents, or who supervise such personnel.

b. Mental health support services. The department shall employ, or shall contract with, a sufficient

number of clinicians to provide mental health support services to all emergency responders. Such support services shall be designed to reduce the effects of psychological trauma emergency responders may experience during and after critical incidents.

c. Emergency mental health hotline. The services offered pursuant to subdivision b of this section shall include operation of a mental health hotline available to emergency responders twenty-four hours per day and 7 days per week. Such hotline shall be staffed by licensed mental health professionals, and trained peer support specialists, and shall provide quick response crisis intervention services, education and referrals, designed to mitigate the effects of job-related stress and trauma. The department shall provide training for peer support specialists, and support operations of the required hotline.

d. Emergency responder wellness sessions. Each year, the department shall make available to all emergency responders a voluntary and confidential wellness session with a clinician in order to:

1. Provide information on mental health conditions, mental health risk factors and mental health symptoms;

2. Discuss available resources provided by the department and third-party organizations, including, but not limited to, treatment options covered under employee health insurance plans, treatment options provided by community-based or not-for-profit organizations, and treatment options provided through peer-led initiatives;

3. Discuss confidentiality guidelines related to the provision of mental health services and treatment; and

4. Discuss personal symptoms and conditions of emergency responders, at such employees discretion.

e. Mental health information and training. 1. The department shall post conspicuously on its website and at each firehouse, EMS station, or 9-1-1 call operation center, information about mental health, including but not limited to mental health conditions, mental health risk factors, mental health symptoms, and available resources for treating mental health conditions.

2. All personnel who supervise emergency responders shall receive annual training on emergency

responder mental health. Such training shall include information about mental health conditions, mental health risk factors, mental health symptoms, available resources, and registration for annual emergency responder wellness sessions.

f. All support services and information provided pursuant to this section shall be developed to meet the specific mental health needs of first responders and shall provide resources and peer support tailored for each covered job title and role within the class of first responders.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 120 days after it becomes law.

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