

PAO'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING MEMBERS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

WHY IS THE PAO FOCUSED ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF ITS MEMBERS NOW?

- The PAO has always been concerned with protecting the mental health and wellness of our members and has maintained a strong stand about the fact that Ontario's sworn and civilian police personnel require the appropriate tools and adequate funding to keep our communities safe. This includes ensuring you have easy access to proper mental health and wellness resources.
- In 2019, member health and wellness was identified as an organizational priority by the PAO Board of Directors at our yearly Think Tank strategic planning session. Since, the PAO has held meetings with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, the Minister of Labour, and the Solicitor General to further our advocacy for increased and improved mental health and wellness resources for police personnel in Ontario. The PAO will continue to advocate on behalf of members at the provincial level and push for dedicated mental health treatment options for Ontario's municipal police personnel.

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO PAO MEMBERS?

- The PAO has several resources at www.pao.ca/EveryoneNeedsBackup that are dedicated to helping police personnel who are dealing with mental health challenges, as these experiences are unique from people in other professions who may also experience PTSD. Resources include 24/7 anonymous support, peer support networks, and other organizations that provide mental health screening and treatment options.

WHERE CAN THIS INITIATIVE BE SEEN?

- This is an internal, member-focused initiative for Ontario's municipal police personnel. It is available on the PAO website. Information is being shared locally by the PAO's 46 member associations.

IS THERE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE?

- The PAO strongly encourages members to share the available resources with their colleagues to be local champions for their peers who may be suffering in silence. If you are interested in sharing your story through this member awareness initiative, please reach out to the PAO at communications@pao.ca. Together, we can break down the stigma associated with PTSD and other mental health issues, and ensure that all police personnel in Ontario feel supported if/when they need – because Everyone Needs Backup.

WHAT IS THE PAO AND ITS LOCAL MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE DOING TO PROTECT POLICE PERSONNEL?

- The PAO continues to strongly advocate to the provincial government for dedicated resources and funding, including specific treatment options for Ontario's municipal police personnel. This would help ensure that our sworn and civilian members have the option of accessing treatment outside of areas that may trigger their mental health further and away from people with whom they interact with in a professional capacity.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE FEATURED IN THE INITIATIVE?

- The people featured in this initiative are police personnel from around Ontario, who have dealt with the realities of the policing profession every single day. They have on-the-job experience dealing with traumatic events while keeping our communities safe.