

Sep 19, 2023

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody, Law Enforcement Leaders and Counselors Encourage Officers Struggling with Mental Health Challenges to Seek Help During National Suicide Prevention Month



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—In recognition of National Suicide Prevention Month, Attorney General Ashley Moody, local law enforcement leaders and counselors are encouraging officers struggling with mental health challenges to seek help. Nationwide, more first responders die by suicide than in the line of duty. In Florida this year, [five law enforcement officers](#) have taken their own lives compared to three officers falling [in the line of duty](#). At the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay today, Attorney General Moody highlighted free resources available to first responders and urged law enforcement officers to seek help.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Law enforcement is a dangerous job and officers can be exposed to gruesome tragedies that leave invisible scars. It’s important our law enforcement heroes know that they do not have to suffer in silence. This National Suicide Prevention Month, we are highlighting free resources available to Florida first responders struggling with mental health challenges—and urging them to seek help.”

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay CEO Clara Reynolds said, “I am extremely thankful to Attorney General Moody for bringing awareness to this vital topic. Florida’s first responders are trained to

run toward danger and be our community's heroes during life's most difficult events. Unfortunately, they are the last to ask for help when facing a behavioral health challenge. We encourage first responders and their loved ones to reach out and connect to support 24/7 at 1-866-4FL-HERO (435-4376)."

Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister said, "I stress to the dedicated members of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office that it's okay not to be okay. It's not okay to not say something if you're struggling. We offer free, comprehensive programs to ensure our deputies are supported physically, mentally, and emotionally. Our goal is to make it easy for our employees to be at their best so they can serve with the utmost professionalism."

Senator Jay Collins said, "As a combat wounded, retired Green Beret, I have witnessed the importance of investing in mental health assistance for individuals serving in harm's way. Our dedicated law enforcement officers and first responders deserve our support, and the HOPE line provides a lifeline to those who often bear the weight of society's most challenging moments. I am grateful for Attorney General Moody's resolute leadership on this issue, advocating tirelessly for the well-being of those who protect and serve our communities. I will always work to ensure that our heroes have the time, tools and training necessary to complete their mission and return home safely to their families."

CEO of the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay Clara Reynolds, Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister, Florida Senator Jay Collins and Hillsborough County Commissioner Ken Hagan joined Attorney General Moody to highlight available resources like the [Hope Line](#).

The Hope Line is operated by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and offers confidential support and resources to first responders struggling with mental health challenges. The Hope Line reports that more than 6.6% of first responders have attempted suicide—10 times the national average.

The Hope Line is available to callers in 11 counties—24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line is operated by former first responders. Since 2021, the Hope Line fielded more than 850 first responder-related calls and the [Crisis Center's Last to Ask website](#) received more than 18,000 visitors since that time. First responders in the 11-county area can receive help by calling 1(866) 4FL-HERO or simply dialing 211.

Anyone that may be struggling with suicidal thoughts should contact the Suicide Crisis Hotline by dialing 988.

#