



TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

STAFF REPORT

Board Meeting Date: November 19, 2019

DATE: October 28, 2019

TO: Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: Alex Kukulus, Deputy Fire Chief
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SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve a contract for services for mental health & wellness services for Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) employees and immediate family, through Steve Nicholas, Marriage Family Therapist (MFT) at a cost of \$15,000 for the period of January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 and authorize the Fire Chief to execute the service agreement. This agreement will further enhance the District's offerings of services to its staff by making a licensed therapist routinely available to all personnel and will include regular training sessions related to stress and suicide prevention, routine station visits and personal contacts between the therapist and staff members, support and diffusing for peer support team members, and pre-employment screening and trainings amongst other services.. (All Commission Districts) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

Discussion and approval of a contract for services for mental health & wellness services for TMFPD employees and immediate family, through Steve Nicholas, MFT at a cost of \$15,000 for the period of January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 and authorize the Fire Chief to execute the service agreement.

PREVIOUS ACTION

In Spring of 2019 the District established a peer support program to provide assistance to employees due to the effects of traumatic stress related to their exposure and employment at TMFPD. This program was successfully developed and additional funds to support the program were included in the FY 19/20 budget.

BACKGROUND

The District has been continuously seeking ways to better support its employees and families from the effects of routine exposure to traumatic events related to the nature of work provided by firefighters. Recent studies indicate that the rate of post-traumatic stress observed in firefighters is similar to that of members of law enforcement and the military. Estimates are that between 7 percent and 37 percent of firefighters meet the criteria for PTSD. Furthermore, suicide and suicidal ideations amongst firefighters is significantly more prevalent than the general population. This was evidenced in the recent loss of one of our firefighters to suicide earlier this year.

As this issue has become more prevalent and our awareness of the problem has increased, the District is focusing on combatting the problem from as many directions as possible. The District's peer support program currently includes 27 employees, and is developing a cutting edge model that is now being expanded regionally and even being replicated at a national level. The District recently added three Chaplains who volunteer to serve the staff of the District in order to offer non-clinical support and emotional support services.

This agreement will further enhance the District's offerings of services to its staff by making a licensed therapist routinely available to all personnel. The intent is to "normalize" the conversations about stress and attempt to diffuse the accumulation of stress that ultimately leads to significant health and wellness issues. In addition, this agreement will include regular training sessions related to stress and suicide prevention, routine station visits and personal contacts between the therapist and staff members, support and diffusing for peer support team members, and pre-employment screening and trainings amongst other services.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost for the contract is \$15,000. The District included \$15,000 as a special line item within the FY19/20 Budget. Additionally, the District has agreed to incur ½ of the contract value from the administration budget to augment the to the Peer Support program budget which brings the current Peer support specific budget line item to \$22,500. Therefore, sufficient funding is included in the FY 19/20 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Fire Commissioners approve a contract for services for mental health & wellness services for TMFPD employees and immediate family, through Steve Nicholas, MFT at a cost of \$15,000 for the period of January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 and authorize the Fire Chief to execute the service agreement.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

"I move to approve a contract for services for mental health & wellness services for TMFPD employees and immediate family, through Steve Nichols, MFT at a cost of \$15,000 for the period of January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 and authorize the Fire Chief to execute the service agreement."