



TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

Board Meeting Date: October 7, 2025

DATE: September 15, 2025

TO: Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: Richard J. Edwards, Fire Chief
Phone: (775) 326-6000 Email: redwards@tmfpd.us

SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve a one-year professional services agreement between Steven Nicholas, DBA EmbGro, and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District for the administration of a Mental Health and Wellness Program for an annual amount not to exceed \$90,000, retroactively effective July 1, 2025, and to authorize the Fire Chief to enter into future contract extensions with this independent contractor. (All Commission Districts.) **FOR POSSIBLE ACTION**

SUMMARY

Recommendation to approve a one-year professional services agreement between Steven Nicholas, DBA EmbGro, and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District for the administration of a Mental Health and Wellness Program for an annual amount not to exceed \$90,000, retroactively effective July 1, 2025.

PREVIOUS ACTION

None

BACKGROUND

First responders are regularly exposed to life-threatening situations, traumatic events, and high-stress environments. Studies reveal that they are at a heightened risk for conditions like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, suicide, depression, and anxiety. The very nature of their jobs, which often involves witnessing human suffering and life-and-death decisions, places a significant emotional burden on them. Firefighters/Paramedics not only battle blazes but also witness casualties, which can lead to lasting trauma. They are also routinely exposed to scenes of violence, accidents, and critical health emergencies, all of which can take a toll on their mental health. Acknowledging and addressing these issues not only supports their well-being but also ensures they can perform their duties effectively.

The District has engaged Dr. Nicholas to provide mental health and wellness services since 2021. He has a doctorate in Counseling and Educational Psychology. He has been practicing as a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist since 2007 and has immersed himself in the phenomena of trauma and the potential growth from adverse events, and has expanded into the world of first responder populations and wildland fire culture. This staff report asks the Board to continue

contracting with Dr. Nicholas' to provide confidential mental health treatment services for members of the District and members of their households, to provide regular guidance in mental health and resilience and quarterly trainings for members of the District, to provide on-call crisis management at emergency scenes or pre-determined post-incident locations, to assist in monthly mental health resilience check-ins, and to be available to participate in the hiring/on-boarding process of new employees, for a term of an additional year.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total cost for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 is not to exceed \$90,000, and sufficient funds are available within the general fund.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Board approve a one-year professional services agreement between Steven Nicholas, DBA EmbGro, and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District for the administration of a Mental Health and Wellness Program for an annual amount not to exceed \$90,000, retroactively effective July 1, 2025, and to authorize the Fire Chief to enter into future contract extensions with this independent contractor.

POSSIBLE MOTION

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

"I move to approve a one-year professional services agreement between Steven Nicholas, DBA EmbGro, and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District for the administration of a Mental Health and Wellness Program for an annual amount not to exceed \$90,000, retroactively effective July 1, 2025, and to authorize the Fire Chief to enter into future contract extensions with this independent contractor."