

New York City Police Department

Health and Wellness Section

Officer Wellness

In 2019, following a string of suicides and the realization that their agency needed to do more to address the emotional, mental, and physical ailments that affect their members (Sworn and Civilian) the New York City Police Department (**NYPD**) created a whole new section to address the mental and physical wellbeing of its members, including retirees. The NYPD is the largest police agency in the United States and has access to tremendous resources and has developed a holistic approach to wellness through a centralized unit that offers numerous resources to help its 55,000 sworn and civilian members.

The NYPD Health and Wellness Section (HWS) has taken on every facet of health and wellness to improve the lives of its members and their families. The unit has its own patch that is worn by its personnel and features a host of programs and support mechanisms that address the major issues in policing. The HWS is staffed by five psychologists, with more being added. Dedicated fulltime personnel serve as peer counselors, certified nutritionists, fitness counselors, yoga instructors and three therapy dogs. The HWS has a strong outreach program and at is outset it distributed locker stickers to every employee in NYPD to remind them of the importance of being well and how to contact the unit for help.

It was also through the HWS that NYPD developed its COVID response to protect its members and provides the vaccine and testing to all its members.

Their professional staff conducts immediate Critical Incident debriefs with officers and civilians who have experienced a traumatic event. They continually hold educational events for their members and have utilized the resources around them as they have multiple partnerships with Columbia University and its Psychology Department. The held a national symposium on Police Resiliency that was attended by 3,100 participants. The HWS created a “Stigma Free Campaign” to reduce the barriers to officers asking for help. The created and distributed “Life Saver Cards” that have all the HWS resources and contacts listed on them and added all their resources to the NYPD intranet. There is also a smartphone App that connects members to resources instantly. The App has been opened over 160,000 times in the last two years.

The HWS and its staff have created the “Rookie Resiliency Training” to better prepare young officers and their families to address the stressors that come with being a police officers and it offers financial guidance. The HWS has also created the Warrior21 Resiliency program in collaboration with Columbia University, as well as designed a psychological autopsy protocol for better investigating and understanding suicides.

The HWS also has an Employee Assistance Unit within its section. The NYPD doubled the staffing to this unit and has been proactively providing trained peer support team members to its officers. The use o the 24 hours peer support line rose dramatically, tripling in the number of cases from 2019.

The HWS has a health van that tours all 77 precincts and offers health screenings. There is a “Sports Unit” that not only encourages fitness but healthy competition through athleticism.

The HWS has partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to create a messaging and to provide nutritional guidance to all its members.

This summary is only a brief overview of many of the NYPD's programs. In the actual submission you will see that NYPD has other programs and incentives to benefit its members. Please review their entire submission and its associated documents to gain a complete understanding of their program.